



Selections from the Writings of 'Abdu'l-Bahá --
STUDY GUIDE
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Selections from the Writings of 'Abdu'l-Bahá

TABLE OF CONTENTS

MAJOR TOPICS		SUBTOPICS	Sections
New Day beginning to be made manifest and fulfilled; those with eyes to see can and should be thankful for it--be kind to all, even enemies		Sun of Truth risen; all to help one another; see all as one, always consider doing kindly things for others, even to enemies; teach Faith to bring peace to mankind. (part of Tablet to the Hague)	1
		Prayer; divine Springtime came--some were heedless, but believers should be thankful for recognizing Him; 'Abdu'l-Bahá attacked; need to be firm, rely on God, teach the Faith, and possess a good character to bring unity and peace to all. ('Abdu'l-Bahá, cited in "The Advent of Divine Justice", p. 26)	2
		One of the very first general messages of our beloved 'Abdu'l-Bahá to His friends in America, dated 5th of Safer 1314 A. H. (1896 A. D.), published in Star of the West Vol. 14 No. 12, March 1924. Revelation of St. John: New Jerusalem, wiped away tears, death not overtake, Alpha and Omega fulfilled in Bahá'u'lláh	3
		Prophecies of Qur'án fulfilled; proofs/signs of Bahá'u'lláh	4
		The first message of 'Abdu'l-Bahá to His friends throughout the world. Published in Star of the West Vol. 14 No. 12, March 1924. Reference to Tablet of the Divine Vision (Sun of Bahá'u'lláh and now shines on believers from Kingdom); be firm and not dismayed at the setting of His Sun; arise to further His Cause	5
		Should be thankful for attaining to the Faith while others who sacrificed had not; in gratitude, one should grow in faith and teach	6
		Messenger of world of the spirit arrived; connections between souls exist and to be increased for love & oneness of all; love not restricted in this age; care for all, young and old; care for enemies--will show power of this Faith; people like children--to be cared for mercifully; prayer	7

	Morning signs only evident to perceptive and pure; friends are as physicians with balm of teachings for man's conscience and hope; do not look on own capacity--look to Bahá'u'lláh's bestowals; unlike queens, handmaids sovereignty eternal; see none as different, never asking if deserve to be loved; kind to enemies; prayer for development	8
	Be firm in Covenant; be tender to servitors of God; be not grieved nor angered, be a friend to all (no exceptions); praise for obedience to Huqúqu'lláh	9
	Rule to guide life: be firm, detached, and loving, worship God, lead, teach, do not rest	10
	Service to friends=Service to Kingdom of God; Consideration for the poor is one of greatest teachings	11
	Love is the secret; strive for it	12
	Green Acre; Religions to be cause of unity; all to be tended to	13
	Praise of independent investigation that found the Faith	14
	Need for true Christians; unity essential; not to speak down to others; Prophets all came to bring virtues, love and unity; unity is life; due to increasing travel, communication, publications, and interdependence, unity can today be achieved; seven candles of unity	15
	Sun of Truth came amidst darkness to those with eyes to see; still only in beginning of the dawn--will stir all things, even though who sought darkness underground; out of gratitude, teach; embody God's qualities: care for stranger and enemies to bring peace	16
	Sun of Bahá'u'lláh has come upon the clouds as a thief; chosen ones to show thankfulness through obedience and reading of Tablets (to become centers of attraction) (Hidden Words, Ornaments, Words of Paradise, Effulgences, Splendours, Glad Tidings); work for peace of all and to bring about Abhá Paradise and life to humanity; 'Abdu'l-Bahá prays for us; supplication	17
	Address to blind individual; Import of heavenly meetings and happiness of following teachings in this age	18

		Praise to God and Bahá'u'lláh for the new era; as the Pharisees rejected Christ, so do the people reject Bahá'u'lláh today; God can never be described but His signs of light are in all things, especially the Mirror (Manifestation)--as means "Father in the Son"; teach the Cause; prayer for assistance and guidance	19
		Though Jews rejected Him, Christ fulfilled the signs of the Messiah	20
God exists but exalted above comprehension; the Nature of Religion and its Power (especially in this Day)		God's existence proven, but Its reality cannot be known; all things interconnected and have their own function--needs Director; all things influence and are influenced--leads to the All-Influencing, Uninfluenced; Manifestations of God as Mirrors reflecting the Sun (i.e., God) for man	21
		Ask alone of God and be submissive to Him.	22
		Religions of past all fulfilled function (and are one), but need to be renewed; religion not series of beliefs or customs but teachings of God which are life of humanity; only such a heavenly power (in God's teachings) can dispel antagonisms of humanity	23
		God exists but is above conceptions people make	24
		Influence of Judaism on Socrates, Greek philosophers	25
		Physical and spiritual station of Manifestations; 'Abdu'l-Bahá as Servant	26
		Each Manifestation had own rank but leading to Bahá'u'lláh	27
		Tree of Life=Bahá'u'lláh, Heavenly Feast (guide the people)	28
		Every atom reflects God's signs; Interconnectedness of past and future; Manifestation of God as Physician (so should believers also be); Prescriptions differ--in this age, it is available for the whole world; New Jerusalem and Word/Letter symbolism; Tablets to be read	29
		Existence of God & Existence of Man (stages within latter)	30
		Manifestation of God the Focal Point for unification; souls with handicaps and trials; influence of Manifestations of God after Their passing; grieve not for slow advance of	31

		Faith there; greatness of Faith; on translations; All-embracing love of Bahá'u'lláh	
		Century/Age of Blessed Beauty	32
		Next Manifestation vs. Next Universal Manifestation	33
Need for sacrifice, teaching, love, unity		Need to sacrifice and widen one's vision; Manifestations of God were all-embracing (and so should we be)	34
		Fasting; call to be heralds of the Kingdom; Bahá'ís to be known for character; to lack private, selfish motives; love all; The Báb and His followers suffered for humanity; not to hurt others; patience amidst calamity; Commission of Investigation; Prayer for East and West (to be in close embrace)	35
		Handmaids of God (and all friends) to be united; long for sacrifice (will be loved and cherished in the next world)	36
Spiritual Assemblies, Consultation			37-46
Community Gatherings/Institutions		Nineteen Day Feast	47-51
		Fellowship, Spiritual meetings	52-53
		Worship meetings/Mashriqu'l-Adhkár	54-64
Travel-teaching, unity, 'Abdu'l-Bahá to America		Teaching & Travel-teaching (Far-East	65
		'Abdu'l-Bahá's perpetual closeness to believers	66
		Travel-teaching (and Paris)	67
		Unity among the friends and glory and effort in God's path; 'Abdu'l-Bahá invited to America	68
		Organization & exhortations obligatory; 'Abdu'l-Bahá to America	69
		Travel-teaching, "10+ principles"; Communion between pure souls; Chicago	70
		Oneness of humanity & teaching; President Woodrow Wilson	71
Human/Social subjects		Import of Science joined to Religion	72
		Need for focus; Ridván--new stirring in sciences, books	73
		Music (and Eastern prejudice against)	74
		Race	75-78

	Serving the Poor	79-81
	Prison	82-83
	Marriage	84-92
	Women	93
	Women and Education	94-96
	Education (and parenting)	97-116
	Children's Duties	117-121
	Education (and parenting)	122-125
	Professions	126-128
Material subjects	Purity, cleanliness, not smoking or opium	129
	Health	130-136
	Animals (hunting/kindness toward)	137-138
Spiritual/Theological subjects	Power of the Holy Spirit	139
	Christ and Christian topics	140-147
	From earthly to spiritual	148-151
	Soul of Murderer	152
	thanksgiving, capacity on Day of Resurrection, assistance in teaching, dream, forgetfulness of self	153
	Love of God (to a doctor)	154
	Tests	155
	Reincarnation (and tests)	156
	Earthly to Spiritual/Promise of Assistance	157
	Thomas Breakwell's happiness (in next world)	158
	Souls' immortality and degrees	159
	Teaching, Books to study, Goodall, Souls saved, Spirituality over materialism	160
	Body and spirit; Kingdom of God and world	161
	Blessings of Bahá'u'lláh on the spirit	162
	Next world is not a place or detectable; Tests and trials are in this world; Soul of heavenly not physical elements; Next world is within this world; oneness of humanity; refer to Centre of Covenant on differences; Poor are especially blessed; Some have attained and others not	163
	California and Mr. Chase	164
	Prayer for departed (husband); will meet and be happy	165

	Self-sacrifice; through divine force of magnetism, possible to traverse time and space	166
	Fate, predestination, and will	167
	Preciousness of (being a believer in) this Day	168
	Death of close ones	169-171
	Prayer (esp. midnight)	172
	Spirits of believers transcending earth	173
Spiritual Qualities and Instructions; Covenant; Teaching; Kingdom of God	Love of God and spiritual qualities	174
	Everlasting Beauty, Riches, Fire, Bounties	175-177
	Attendance at meetings; travel to Montana	178
	Turn to Kingdom for courage and power	179
	Free from earthly to spiritual	180
	The Covenant and Testament (and Trials related to)	182-192
	Need to strive in teaching, unity, love, peace. Attacks on Faith as it grows, trials, need for unity of believers and love to all	193-200
	Need to teach, sacrifice, and create love	201-219
	On peace, To readers of The Christian Commonwealth, 1 January 1913	220
	Duties of believers to establish unity amongst themselves and importance of the peace of mankind	221
	Travel-teaching	222
	Work for peace	223
	Need for sacrificing souls against worldliness of humanity	224
	Material & spiritual civilization (otherwise destructive); carnal vs. spiritual nature; unity in diversity; obedience and well-wishing to governments; need for service to Cause	225
	(Limitations of) Peace conference	226
	part of Tablet to the Hague; elaborates on "12" principles	227
	(Limitations of) Peace Committee in Hague; associate with Esperantists (and what to teach about Bahá'u'lláh)	228
	Happiness in Kingdom of God; Need for confidence and hope amidst troubles; will be confirmed; observe commandments and wish well of country/government	229

		Persevere in Call to the (undying) Kingdom to revive the people	230
		Perpetuity of the Kingdom of God	231
		President Woodrow Wilson	232
		Prayers for firmness and protection of believers; Beware & caution against internal strife	233
		Not to grieve/fear over 'Abdu'l-Bahá's imprisonment or passing	234
		Prayer for firmness and reward of believers	235
		Prayer for firmness; Praise for believers; need to teach and demonstrate spiritual qualities; obey government and be apolitical	236
Tablet of Visitation of 'Abdu'l-Bahá		Tablet of Visitation of 'Abdu'l-Bahá	237

Selections from the Writings of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá

– 1 –

O peoples of the world! The Sun of Truth hath risen to illumine the whole earth, and to spiritualize the community of man. Laudable are the results and the fruits thereof, abundant the holy evidences deriving from this grace. This is mercy unalloyed and purest bounty; it is light for the world and all its peoples; it is harmony and fellowship, and love and solidarity; indeed it is compassion and unity, and the end of foreignness; it is the being at one, in complete dignity and freedom, with all on earth.

The Blessed Beauty saith: “Ye are all the fruits of one tree, the leaves of one branch.” Thus hath He likened this world of being to a single tree, and all its peoples to the leaves thereof, and the blossoms and fruits. It is needful for the bough to blossom, and leaf and fruit to flourish, and upon the interconnection of all parts of the world-tree, dependeth the flourishing of leaf and blossom, and the sweetness of the fruit.

For this reason must all human beings powerfully sustain one another and seek for everlasting life; and for this reason must the lovers of God in this contingent world become the mercies and the blessings sent forth by that clement King of the seen and unseen realms. Let them purify their sight and behold all humankind as leaves and blossoms and fruits of the tree of being. Let them at all times concern themselves with doing a kindly thing for one of their fellows, offering to someone love, consideration, thoughtful help. Let them see no one as their enemy, or as wishing them ill, but think of all humankind as their friends; regarding the alien as an intimate, the stranger as a companion, staying free of prejudice, drawing no lines.

In this day, the one favored at the Threshold of the Lord is he who handeth round the cup of faithfulness; who bestoweth, even upon his enemies, the jewel of bounty, and lendeth, even to his fallen oppressor, a helping hand; it is he who will, even to the fiercest of his foes, be a loving friend. These are the Teachings of the Blessed Beauty, these the counsels of the Most Great Name.

O ye dear friends! The world is at war and the human race is in travail and mortal combat. The dark night of hate hath taken over, and the light of good faith is blotted out. The peoples and kindreds of the earth have sharpened their claws, and are hurling themselves one against the other. It is the very foundation of the human race that is being destroyed. It is thousands of households that are vagrant and dispossessed, and every year seeth thousands upon thousands of human beings weltering in their lifeblood on dusty battlefields. The tents of life and joy are down. The generals practice their generalship, boasting of the blood they shed, competing one with the next in inciting to violence. “With this sword,” saith one of them, “I beheaded a people!” And another: “I toppled a nation to the ground!” And yet another: “I brought a government down!” On such things do men pride themselves, in such do they glory! Love—righteousness—these are everywhere censured, while despised are harmony, and devotion to the truth.

The Faith of the Blessed Beauty is summoning mankind to safety and love, to amity and peace; it hath raised up its tabernacle on the heights of the earth, and directeth its call to all nations. Wherefore, O ye who are God’s lovers, know ye the value of this precious Faith, obey its teachings, walk in this road that is drawn straight, and show ye this way to the people. Lift up your voices and sing out the song of the Kingdom. Spread far and wide the precepts and counsels of the loving Lord, so that this world will change into another world, and this darksome earth will be flooded with light, and the dead body of mankind will arise and live; so that every soul will ask for immortality, through the holy breaths of God.

Soon will your swiftly passing days be over, and the fame and riches, the comforts, the joys provided by this rubbish-heap, the world, will be gone without a trace. Summon ye, then, the people to God, and invite humanity to follow the example of the Company on high. Be ye loving fathers to the orphan, and a refuge to the helpless, and a treasury for the poor, and a cure for the ailing. Be ye the helpers of every victim of oppression, the patrons of the disadvantaged. Think ye at all times of rendering some service to every member of the human race. Pay ye no heed to aversion and rejection, to disdain, hostility, injustice: act ye in the opposite way. Be ye sincerely kind, not in appearance only. Let each one of God's loved ones center his attention on this: to be the Lord's mercy to man; to be the Lord's grace. Let him do some good to every person whose path he crosseth, and be of some benefit to him. Let him improve the character of each and all, and reorient the minds of men. In this way, the light of divine guidance will shine forth, and the blessings of God will cradle all mankind: for love is light, no matter in what abode it dwelleth; and hate is darkness, no matter where it may make its nest. O friends of God! That the hidden Mystery may stand revealed, and the secret essence of all things may be disclosed, strive ye to banish that darkness for ever and ever.

Summary:

The passage calls for unity and harmony among all people, emphasizing the interconnectedness of humanity as leaves, blossoms, and fruits of one tree. It encourages acts of kindness, love, and compassion, even towards perceived enemies. The teachings emphasize the importance of faithfulness, generosity, and serving others. The current state of the world is described as a war

with hate prevailing, urging believers to spread the message of the Faith to bring about peace and transformation.

Key Points:

1. Unity and interconnectedness of humanity
2. Emphasis on kindness, love, and compassion
3. Serving others, even enemies, with faithfulness and generosity
4. Urgency to spread the teachings for global transformation
5. Contrast between the current state of the world and the desired state of peace

Questions and Answers:

1. What metaphor is used to describe the unity of humanity?

Answer: The metaphor of a tree, where all people are likened to leaves, blossoms, and fruits of one tree.

2. How are believers advised to treat others, including enemies?

Answer: Believers are encouraged to offer love, consideration, and thoughtful help to all, even enemies.

3. What is the current state of the world according to the passage?

Answer: The world is described as being at war, with hate prevailing, and humanity engaged in mortal combat.

4. What qualities are highlighted as essential for believers in the teachings?

Answer: Faithfulness, generosity, kindness, and a willingness to serve others are emphasized.

5. What is the ultimate goal of spreading the teachings according to the passage?

Answer: The goal is to bring about a transformation in the world, turning it into a place of light, peace, and divine guidance, with humanity living in unity and love.

– 2 –

O my Lord! I have drawn nigh unto Thee, in the depths of this darksome night, confiding in Thee with the tongue of my heart, trembling with joy at the sweet scents that blow from Thy realm, the All-Glorious, calling unto Thee, saying:

O my Lord, no words do I find to glorify Thee; no way do I see for the bird of my mind to soar upward to Thy Kingdom of Holiness; for Thou, in Thy very essence, art sanctified above those tributes, and in Thy very being art beyond the reach of those praises which are offered Thee by the people that Thou hast created. In the sanctity of Thine own being hast Thou ever been exalted above the understanding of the learned among the Company on high, and forever wilt Thou remain enwrapped within the holiness of Thine own reality, unreached by the knowledge of those dwellers in Thine exalted Kingdom who glorify Thy Name.

O God, my God! How can I glorify or describe Thee inaccessible as Thou art; immeasurably high and sanctified art Thou above every description and praise.

O God, my God! Have mercy then upon my helpless state, my poverty, my misery, my abasement! Give me to drink from the generous cup of Thy grace and forgiveness, stir me with the sweet scents of Thy love, gladden my bosom with the light of Thy knowledge, purify my soul with

the mysteries of Thy oneness, raise me to life with the gentle breeze that cometh from the gardens of Thy mercy—till I sever myself from all else but Thee, and lay hold of the hem of Thy garment of grandeur, and consign to oblivion all that is not Thee, and be companioned by the sweet breathings that waft during these Thy days, and attain unto faithfulness at Thy Threshold of Holiness, and arise to serve Thy Cause, and to be humble before Thy loved ones, and, in the presence of Thy favored ones, to be nothingness itself.

Verily art Thou the Helper, the Sustainer, the Exalted, the Most Generous.

O God, my God! I beg of Thee by the dawning of the light of Thy Beauty that hath illumined all the earth, and by the glance of Thy divine compassion's eye that considereth all things, and by the surging sea of Thy bestowals in which all things are immersed, and by Thy streaming clouds of bounty raining down gifts upon the essences of all created things, and by the splendors of Thy mercy that existed before ever the world was—to help Thy chosen ones to be faithful, and assist Thy loved ones to serve at Thine exalted Threshold, and cause them to gain the victory through the battalions of Thy might that overpowereth all things, and reinforce them with a great fighting host from out of the Concourse on high.

O my Lord! They are weak souls standing at Thy door; they are paupers in Thy courtyard, desperate for Thy grace, in dire need of Thy succor, turning their faces toward the kingdom of Thy oneness, yearning for the bounties of Thy bestowals. O my Lord! Flood Thou their minds with Thy holy light; cleanse Thou their hearts with the grace of Thine assistance; gladden their bosoms with the fragrance of the joys that waft from Thy Company above; make bright their eyes by beholding the signs and tokens of Thy might; cause them to be the ensigns of purity, the banners of sanctity waving high above all creatures on the summits of the earth; make Thou their words to move hearts which are even as solid rock. May they arise to serve Thee and dedicate themselves to the Kingdom of Thy divinity, and set their faces toward the realm of Thy Self-Subsistence, and spread far and wide Thy signs, and be illumined by Thy streaming lights, and unfold Thy hidden mysteries. May they guide Thy servants unto gentle waters and to the fountain of Thy mercy that wellet and leapeth in the midmost heart of the Heaven of Thy oneness. May they hoist the sail of detachment upon the Ark of Salvation, and move over the seas of Thy knowledge; may they spread wide the pinions of unity and by their aid soar upward to the Kingdom of Thy singleness to become servants whom the Supreme Concourse will applaud, whose praises the dwellers in Thine all-glorious realm will utter; may they hear the heralds of the invisible world as they raise their cry of the Most Great Glad-Tidings; may they, in their longing to meet Thee, invoke and pray unto Thee, intoning wondrous orisons at the dawn of light—O my Lord Who disposest all things—shedding their tears at morningtide and even, yearning to pass into the shadow of Thy mercy that endeth never.

Help them, O my Lord, under all conditions, support them at all times with Thine angels of holiness, they who are Thine invisible hosts, Thy heavenly battalions who bring down to defeat the massed armies of this nether world.

Verily art Thou the Mighty, the Powerful, the Strong, the All-Encompassing, the One Who hath dominion over all that is.

O holy Lord! O Lord of loving-kindness! We stray about Thy dwelling, longing to behold Thy beauty, and loving all Thy ways. We are hapless, lowly, and of small account. We are paupers: show us mercy, give us bounty; look not upon our failings, hide Thou our endless sins. Whatever we are, still are we Thine, and what we speak and hear is praise of Thee, and it is Thy face we seek, Thy path we follow. Thou art the Lord of loving-kindness, we are sinners and astray and far from home. Wherefore, O Cloud of Mercy, grant us some drops of rain. O Flowering Bed of grace,

send forth a fragrant breeze. O Sea of all bestowals, roll towards us a great wave. O Sun of Bounty, send down a shaft of light. Grant us pity, grant us grace. By Thy beauty, we come with no provision but our sins, with no good deeds to tell of, only hopes. Unless Thy concealing veil doth cover us, and Thy protection shield and cradle us, what power have these helpless souls to rise and serve Thee, what substance have these wretched ones to make a brave display? Thou Who art the Mighty, the All-Powerful, help us, favor us; withered as we are, revive us with showers from Thy clouds of grace; lowly as we are, illumine us with bright rays from the Daystar of Thy oneness. Cast Thou these thirsty fish into the ocean of Thy mercy, guide Thou this lost caravan to the shelter of Thy singleness; to the wellspring of guidance lead Thou the ones who have wandered far astray, and grant to those who have missed the path a haven within the precincts of Thy might. Lift Thou to these parched lips the bounteous and soft-flowing waters of heaven, raise up these dead to everlasting life. Grant Thou to the blind eyes that will see. Make Thou the deaf to hear, the dumb to speak. Set Thou the dispirited ablaze, make Thou the heedless mindful, warn Thou the proud, awaken those who sleep.

Thou art the Mighty, Thou art the Bestower, Thou art the Loving. Verily Thou art the Beneficent, the Most Exalted.

O ye loved ones of God, ye helpers of this evanescent Servant! When the Sun of Reality shed its endless bounties from the Dawning-Point of all desires, and this world of being was lit with that sacred light from pole to pole, with such intensity did it cast down its rays that it blotted out the Stygian dark forever, whereupon this earth of dust became the envy of the spheres of heaven, and this lowly place took on the state and panoply of the supernal realm. The gentle breeze of holiness blew over it, scattering abroad sweet savors; the spring winds of heaven passed by it, and over it, from the Source of all bestowals, were wafted fruitful airs that carried boundless grace. Then the bright dawn rose, and there came tidings of great joy. The divine springtime was here, pitching its tents in this contingent world, so that all creation leapt and danced. The withered earth brought forth immortal blooms, the dead dust woke to everlasting life. Then came forth flowers of mystic learning, and, bespeaking the knowledge of God, fresh greenery from the ground. The contingent world displayed God's bounteous gifts, the visible world reflecting the glories of realms that were hidden from sight. God's summons was proclaimed, the table of the Eternal Covenant was readied, the cup of the Testament was passed from hand to hand, the universal invitation was sent forth. Then some among the people were set afire with the wine of heaven, and some were left without a share of this greatest of bestowals. The sight and insight of some were illumined by the light of grace, and there were some who, hearing the anthems of unity, leapt for joy. There were birds that began to carol in the gardens of holiness, there were nightingales in the branches of the rose tree of heaven that raised their plaintive cries. Then were decked and adorned both the Kingdom on high and the earth below, and this world became the envy of high heaven. Yet alas, alas, the neglectful have stayed fast in their heedless sleep, and the foolish have spurned this most sacred of bestowals. The blind remain shrouded in their veils, the deaf have no share in what hath come to pass, the dead have no hopes of attaining thereto, for even as He saith: "They despair of the life to come, as the infidels despair that the dwellers in the tombs will rise again."¹

As to you, O ye loved ones of God! Loose your tongues and offer Him thanks; praise ye and glorify the Beauty of the Adored One, for ye have drunk from this purest of chalices, and ye are cheered and set aglow with this wine. Ye have detected the sweet scents of holiness, ye have smelled the musk of faithfulness from Joseph's raiment. Ye have fed on the honeydew of loyalty from the hands of Him Who is the one alone Beloved, ye have feasted on immortal dishes at the bounteous banquet table of the Lord. This plenty is a special favor bestowed by a loving God, these

are blessings and rare gifts deriving from His grace. In the Gospel He saith: “For many are called, but few are chosen.”² That is, to many is it offered, but rare is the soul who is singled out to receive the great bestowal of guidance. “Such is the bounty of God: to whom He will He giveth it, and of immense bounty is God.”³

O ye loved ones of God! From the peoples of the world, against the Candle of the Covenant discordant winds do beat and blow. The Nightingale of faithfulness is beset by renegades who are even as ravens of hate. The Dove of God’s remembrance is hard pressed by mindless birds of night, and the Gazelle that dwelleth in the meadows of God’s love is being hunted down by ravening beasts. Deadly is the peril, tormenting the pain.

The beloved of the Lord must stand fixed as the mountains, firm as impregnable walls. Unmoved must they remain by even the direst adversities, ungrieved by the worst of disasters. Let them cling to the hem of Almighty God, and put their faith in the Beauty of the Most High; let them lean on the unfailing help that cometh from the Ancient Kingdom, and depend on the care and protection of the generous Lord. Let them at all times refresh and restore themselves with the dews of heavenly grace, and with the breaths of the Holy Spirit revive and renew themselves from moment to moment. Let them rise up to serve their Lord, and do all in their power to scatter His breathings of holiness far and wide. Let them be a mighty fortress to defend His Faith, an impregnable citadel for the hosts of the Ancient Beauty. Let them faithfully guard the edifice of the Cause of God from every side; let them become the bright stars of His luminous skies. For the hordes of darkness are assailing this Cause from every direction, and the peoples of the earth are intent on extinguishing this evident Light. And since all the kindreds of the world are mounting their attack, how can our attention be diverted, even for a moment? Assuredly be cognizant of these things, be watchful, and guard the Cause of God.

The most vital duty, in this day, is to purify your characters, to correct your manners, and improve your conduct. The beloved of the Merciful must show forth such character and conduct among His creatures, that the fragrance of their holiness may be shed upon the whole world, and may quicken the dead, inasmuch as the purpose of the Manifestation of God and the dawning of the limitless lights of the Invisible is to educate the souls of men, and refine the character of every living man—so that blessed individuals, who have freed themselves from the murk of the animal world, shall rise up with those qualities which are the adornings of the reality of man. The purpose is that earthlings should turn into the people of Heaven, and those who walk in darkness should come into the light, and those who are excluded should join the inner circle of the Kingdom, and those who are as nothing should become intimates of the everlasting Glory. It is that the portionless should gain their share of the boundless sea, and the ignorant drink their fill from the living fount of knowledge; that those who thirst for blood should forsake their savagery, and those who are barbed of claw should turn gentle and forbearing, and those who love war should seek instead for true conciliation; it is that the brutal, their talons razor-sharp, should enjoy the benefits of lasting peace; that the foul should learn that there is a realm of purity, and the tainted find their way to the rivers of holiness.

Unless these divine bestowals be revealed from the inner self of humankind, the bounty of the Manifestation will prove barren, and the dazzling rays of the Sun of Truth will have no effect whatever.

Wherefore, O beloved of the Lord, strive ye with heart and soul to receive a share of His holy attributes and take your portion of the bounties of His sanctity—that ye may become the tokens of unity, the standards of singleness, and seek out the meaning of oneness; that ye may, in this garden of God, lift up your voices and sing the blissful anthems of the spirit. Become ye as the birds who

offer Him their thanks, and in the blossoming bowers of life chant ye such melodies as will dazzle the minds of those who know. Raise ye a banner on the highest peaks of the world, a flag of God's favor to ripple and wave in the winds of His grace; plant ye a tree in the field of life, amid the roses of this visible world, that will yield a fruitage fresh and sweet.

I swear by the true Teacher that if ye will act in accord with the admonitions of God, as revealed in His luminous Tablets, this darksome dust will mirror forth the Kingdom of heaven, and this nether world the realm of the All-Glorious.

O ye loved ones of the Lord! Praise be to Him, the unseen, welling bounties of the Sun of Truth encompass you on every side, and from every direction the portals of His mercy stand ajar. Now is the time to take advantage of these bestowals, and benefit therefrom. Know ye the value of this time, let not this chance escape you. Stay ye entirely clear of this dark world's concerns, and become ye known by the attributes of those essences that make their home in the Kingdom. Then shall ye see how intense is the glory of the heavenly Daystar, and how blinding bright are the tokens of bounty coming out of the invisible realm.

Summary:

The passage is a prayer expressing deep reverence and longing for communion with God. It emphasizes the ineffability of God's attributes and seeks mercy, grace, and guidance. The believer asks for assistance in becoming faithful servants, spreading divine teachings, and being steadfast

in the face of challenges. The passage also encourages believers to purify their characters and improve their conduct to reflect the attributes of the divine realm.

Key Points:

1. Invocation and adoration of God's greatness
2. Expression of humility and recognition of human inadequacy
3. Plea for mercy, grace, and guidance
4. Desire for spiritual purification and improvement of character
5. Call for believers to be steadfast, serve God's Cause, and spread divine teachings
6. Encouragement to become symbols of unity and standards of singleness
7. Emphasis on the transformative power of divine attributes in human lives

Questions and Answers:

1. What does the believer acknowledge about God's attributes in the prayer?

Answer: The believer acknowledges the sanctity and incomprehensibility of God's essence, recognizing that God is beyond human understanding.

2. What is the plea made regarding the believer's own state and condition?

Answer: The believer pleads for mercy upon their helpless state, poverty, and misery, asking to be uplifted by God's grace, love, and knowledge.

3. What qualities are believers encouraged to embody in their service to God?

Answer: Believers are encouraged to be steadfast, serve God's Cause, and spread divine teachings. They are urged to purify their characters and improve their conduct.

4. How does the passage describe the current state of the world and the believers' role?

Answer: The passage describes a world in need of divine guidance and believers as instruments to spread the light of God, facing challenges and adversities.

5. What is the believer's aspiration for the world and fellow believers?

Answer: The believer aspires for the world to reflect the Kingdom of heaven and encourages fellow believers to take advantage of the divine bestowals, remaining clear of worldly concerns.

– 3 –

O ye beloved of God! O ye children of His Kingdom! Verily, verily, the new heaven and the new earth are come. The holy City, new Jerusalem, hath come down from on high in the form of a maid of heaven, veiled, beauteous, and unique, and prepared for reunion with her lovers on earth. The angelic company of the Celestial Concourse hath joined in a call that hath run throughout the universe, all loudly and mightily acclaiming: "This is the City of God and His abode, wherein shall dwell the pure and holy among His servants. He shall live with them, for they are His people and He is their Lord."

He hath wiped away their tears, kindled their light, rejoiced their hearts and enraptured their souls. Death shall no more overtake them neither shall sorrow, weeping or tribulation afflict them. The Lord God Omnipotent hath been enthroned in His Kingdom and hath made all things new. This is the truth and what truth can be greater than that announced by the Revelation of St. John the Divine?

He is Alpha and Omega. He is the One that will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life and bestow upon the sick the remedy of true salvation. He whom such grace aideth is verily he that receiveth the most glorious heritage from the Prophets of God and His holy ones. The Lord will be his God, and he His dearly beloved son.

Rejoice, then, O ye beloved of the Lord and His chosen ones, and ye the children of God and His people, raise your voices to laud and magnify the Lord, the Most High; for His light hath beamed forth, His signs have appeared and the billows of His rising ocean have scattered on every shore many a precious pearl.

Summary:

The passage announces the arrival of the new heaven and the new earth, symbolized by the holy City, new Jerusalem. It describes a divine call rejoicing the hearts of believers, promising an end to sorrow, weeping, and tribulation. The Lord God is enthroned, making all things new, and

offering the water of life and the remedy of true salvation. Believers are urged to rejoice and magnify the Lord for the appearance of divine signs and the scattering of precious pearls.

Key Points:

1. Arrival of the new heaven and new earth symbolized by the holy City, new Jerusalem.
2. Announcement of the City prepared for reunion with believers on earth.
3. Proclamation by the angelic company of the Celestial Concourse.
4. The elimination of death, sorrow, weeping, and tribulation for the pure and holy.
5. Enthronement of the Lord God Omnipotent and the renewal of all things.
6. Reference to the Revelation of St. John the Divine and the truth it conveys.
7. The promise of the water of life and true salvation for those who are athirst.
8. The glorious heritage received by those aided by divine grace.
9. Invitation to rejoice and magnify the Lord for the appearance of divine signs.

Questions and Answers:

1. What is the symbolic representation of the new heaven and new earth in the passage?

Answer: The holy City, new Jerusalem, is presented as the symbolic representation of the new heaven and new earth.

2. What is the divine call mentioned in the passage, and what does it proclaim?

Answer: The angelic company of the Celestial Concourse issues a call proclaiming the City of God and His abode, promising the elimination of sorrow, weeping, and tribulation for the pure and holy.

3. What is the significance of the Lord God Omnipotent being enthroned?

Answer: The enthronement of the Lord God Omnipotent signifies a renewal of all things, bringing an end to death and afflictions, and making all things new.

4. What promises are made to those who receive the grace mentioned in the passage?

Answer: Those who receive divine grace are promised the water of life, true salvation, and the most glorious heritage from the Prophets of God and His holy ones.

5. How does the passage describe the impact of the Lord's light and signs on believers?

Answer: Believers are encouraged to rejoice and magnify the Lord for the appearance of divine signs, and the billows of His rising ocean have scattered precious pearls on every shore.

— 4 —

Praise be to Him Who hath made the world of being, and hath fashioned all that is, Him Who hath raised up the sincere to a station of honor¹ and hath made the invisible world to appear on the plane of the visible—yet still, in their drunken stupor,² do men wander and stray.

He hath laid down the foundations of the lofty Citadel, He hath inaugurated the Cycle of Glory, He hath brought forth a new creation on this day that is clearly Judgement Day—and still do the heedless stay fast in their drunken sleep.

The Bugle³ hath sounded, the Trumpet⁴ hath been blown, the Crier hath raised his call, and all upon the earth have swooned away—but still do the dead, in the tombs of their bodies, sleep on.

And the second clarion⁵ hath sounded, there hath followed the second blast after the first,⁶ and the dread woe hath come, and every nursing mother hath forgot the infant at her breast⁷—yet still the people, confused and distracted, heed it not.

And the Resurrection hath dawned, and the Hour hath struck, and the Path hath been drawn straight, and the Balance hath been set up, and all upon the earth have been gathered together⁸—but still the people see no sign of the way.

The light hath shone forth, and radiance floodeth Mount Sinai, and a gentle wind bloweth from over the gardens of the Ever-Forgiving Lord; the sweet breaths of the spirit are passing by, and those who lay buried in the grave are rising up—and still do the heedless slumber on in their tombs.

The flames of hell have been made to blaze, and heaven hath been brought nigh; the celestial gardens are in flower, and fresh pools are brimming over, and paradise gleameth in beauty—but the unaware are still mired down in their empty dreams.

The veil hath fallen away, the curtain is lifted, the clouds have parted, the Lord of Lords is in plain sight—yet all hath passed the sinners by.

It is He Who hath made for you the new creation,⁹ and brought on the woe¹⁰ that surpasseth all others, and gathered the holy together in the realm on high. Verily in this are signs for those who have eyes to see.

And among His signs is the appearance of omens and joyous prophecies, of hints and clues, the spreading of many and various tidings, and the anticipations of the righteous, they who have now attained their goal.

And among His signs are His splendors, rising above the horizon of oneness, His lights streaming out from the dayspring of might, and the announcement of the Most Great Glad-Tidings by His Herald, the One, the Incomparable. Verily in this is a brilliant proof for the company of those who know.

Among His signs is His being manifest, being seen by all, standing as His own proof, and His presence among witnesses in every region, among peoples who fell upon Him even as wolves, and compassed Him about from every side.

Among His signs is His withstanding powerful nations and all-conquering states, and a host of enemies thirsting for His blood, intent at every moment upon His ruin, wheresoever He might be. Verily this is a matter deserving the scrutiny of those who ponder the signs and tokens of God.

Another of His signs is the marvel of His discourse, the eloquence of His utterance, the rapidity with which His Writings were revealed, His words of wisdom, His verses, His epistles, His communes, His unfolding of the Qur'án, both the abstruse verses thereof and the clear. By thy very life! This thing is plain as day to whoever will regard it with the eye of justice.

Again among His signs is the dawning sun of His knowledge, and the rising moon of His arts and skills, and His demonstrating perfection in all His ways, as testified by the learned and accomplished of many nations.

And again among His signs is the fact that His beauty stayed inviolate, and His human temple was protected as He revealed His splendors, despite the massed attacks of all His foes, who came against Him in their thousands with their darting arrows, spears and swords. Herein is verily a wonder and a warning to any fair judge.

And among His signs is His long-suffering, His tribulations and His woes, His agony in His chains and fetters, and His calling out at every moment: “Come unto Me, come unto Me, ye righteous! Come unto Me, come unto Me, ye lovers of the good! Come unto Me, come unto Me, ye dawning points of light!” Verily the gates of mystery are opened wide—but still do the wicked disport themselves with their vain cavillings!¹¹

Yet another of His signs is the promulgation of His Book, His decisive Holy Text wherein He reproved the kings, and His dire warning to that one¹² whose mighty rule was felt around the world—and whose great throne then toppled down in a matter of brief days—this being a fact clearly established and widely known.

And among His signs is the sublimity of His grandeur, His exalted state, His towering glory, and the shining out of His beauty above the horizon of the Prison: so that heads were bowed before Him and voices lowered, and humble were the faces that turned His way. This is a proof never witnessed in the ages gone before.

Again among His signs are the extraordinary things He continually did, the miracles He performed, the wonders appearing from Him without interruption like the streaming down of His clouds—and the acknowledgement, even by unbelievers, of His powerful light. By His own life! This was clearly verified, it was demonstrated to those of every persuasion who came into the presence of the living, the self-subsisting Lord.

And yet another of His signs is the wide-spreading rays of the sun of His era, the rising moon of His times in the heaven of all the ages: His day, which standeth at the summit of all days, for its rank and power, its sciences and its arts, reaching far and wide, that have dazzled the world and astonished the minds of men.

Verily is this a matter settled and established for all time.

Summary:

The passage praises the Creator for making the world of being, unveiling the invisible world on the visible plane. It depicts a spiritual awakening and judgment day, emphasizing the heedlessness of humanity. Signs and prophecies are highlighted, along with the appearance of omens and joyous tidings. The signs also include the manifestation of the divine, His withstanding adversaries, eloquent discourse, knowledge, protection, long-suffering, and the promulgation of His Book. The

sublimity of His grandeur and extraordinary deeds, along with the wide-spreading influence of His era, are presented as established proofs.

Key Points:

1. Praise for the Creator making the world of being and unveiling the invisible on the visible.
2. Spiritual awakening and judgment day with emphasis on human heedlessness.
3. Signs and prophecies, including omens, joyous tidings, and the anticipation of the righteous.
4. Manifestation of the divine, withstanding adversaries, eloquent discourse, and knowledge.
5. Protection of the divine being despite massed attacks and inviolate beauty.
6. Long-suffering, tribulations, and woes endured by the divine.
7. Promulgation of the divine Book and warnings to kings, with a mention of a fallen throne.
8. Sublimity of grandeur, exalted state, towering glory, and shining beauty of the divine.
9. Extraordinary deeds, miracles, and wonders performed by the divine.
10. Wide-spreading influence of the divine era, reaching far and wide.

Questions and Answers:

1. What are the signs and prophecies mentioned in the passage?

Answer: The signs and prophecies include omens, joyous tidings, hints, and clues, along with the anticipation of the righteous.

2. How does the passage describe the divine being's protection against adversaries?

Answer: Despite massed attacks, the divine being's beauty remains inviolate, and His human temple is protected.

3. What is highlighted regarding the divine discourse and knowledge in the passage?

Answer: The passage emphasizes the eloquence of divine discourse, rapidity of Writings, verses, and the unfolding of the Qur'an, demonstrating knowledge and wisdom.

4. What is the divine being's call during tribulations and woes mentioned in the passage?

Answer: The divine being calls out to the righteous, lovers of the good, and dawning points of light, inviting them to come unto Him during tribulations and woes.

5. What is established as a proof in the passage?

Answer: The wide-spreading rays of the divine era, reaching far and wide, are established as a proof, standing at the summit of all days in rank and power.

— 5 —

The world's great Light, once resplendent upon all mankind, hath set, to shine everlastingly from the Abhá Horizon, His Kingdom of fadeless glory, shedding splendor upon His loved ones from on high and breathing into their hearts and souls the breath of eternal life.

Ponder in your hearts that which He hath foretold in His Tablet of the Divine Vision that hath been spread throughout the world. Therein He saith: "Thereupon she wailed and exclaimed: 'May the world and all that is therein be a ransom for Thy woes. O Sovereign of heaven and earth! Wherefore hast Thou left Thyself in the hands of the dwellers of this prison-city of 'Akká? Hasten Thou to other dominions, to Thy retreats above, whereon the eyes of the people of names have

never fallen.' We smiled and spake not. Reflect upon these most exalted words, and comprehend the purpose of this hidden and sacred mystery."

O ye beloved of the Lord! Beware, beware lest ye hesitate and waver. Let not fear fall upon you, neither be troubled nor dismayed. Take ye good heed lest this calamitous day slacken the flames of your ardor, and quench your tender hopes. Today is the day for steadfastness and constancy. Blessed are they that stand firm and immovable as the rock and brave the storm and stress of this tempestuous hour. They, verily, shall be the recipients of God's grace; they, verily, shall receive His divine assistance, and shall be truly victorious. They shall shine amidst mankind with a radiance which the dwellers of the Pavilion of Glory laud and magnify. To them is proclaimed this celestial call, revealed in His Most Holy Book: "Let not your hearts be perturbed, O people, when the glory of My Presence is withdrawn, and the ocean of My utterance is stilled. In My presence amongst you there is a wisdom, and in My absence there is yet another, inscrutable to all but God, the Incomparable, the All-Knowing. Verily, We behold you from Our realm of glory, and shall aid whosoever will arise for the triumph of Our Cause with the hosts of the Concourse on high and a company of Our favored angels."

The Sun of Truth, that Most Great Light, hath set upon the horizon of the world to rise with deathless splendor over the Realm of the Limitless. In His Most Holy Book He calleth the firm and steadfast of His friends: "Be not dismayed, O peoples of the world, when the daystar of My beauty is set, and the heaven of My tabernacle is concealed from your eyes. Arise to further My Cause, and to exalt My Word amongst men."

Summary:

The passage emphasizes the setting of the world's great Light, referring to Bahá'u'lláh, and the eternal splendor shining from the Abhá Horizon. It encourages believers not to waver, stand firm in the face of challenges, and maintain steadfastness. The Tablet of the Divine Vision is referenced, highlighting a mystery and calling for reflection on exalted words. The believers are warned against hesitation, fear, or dismay, with a call for constancy and steadfastness during challenging

times. The Sun of Truth is described as having set but rising again with deathless splendor over the Realm of the Limitless.

Key Points:

1. The setting of the world's great Light, Bahá'u'lláh, and the eternal splendor shining from the Abhá Horizon.
2. Reference to the Tablet of the Divine Vision and the call for reflection on exalted words and hidden mysteries.
3. Warning against hesitation, fear, or dismay, and a call for steadfastness, constancy, and avoiding a slackening of ardor.
4. Encouragement for believers to stand firm as a rock, brave storms, and remain immovable during challenging times.
5. The proclamation of a celestial call revealed in Bahá'u'lláh's Most Holy Book, assuring divine assistance and victory.

Questions and Answers:

1. Who is referred to as the world's great Light in the passage?

Answer: The world's great Light is Bahá'u'lláh.

2. What is the significance of the Tablet of the Divine Vision in the passage?

Answer: The Tablet of the Divine Vision is referenced for believers to reflect on exalted words and hidden mysteries.

3. What is the warning given to believers, and what virtues are emphasized?

Answer: Believers are warned against hesitation, fear, or dismay. The virtues of steadfastness, constancy, and maintaining ardor are emphasized.

4. How is the Sun of Truth described in the passage, and what encouragement is given to believers?

Answer: The Sun of Truth is described as having set but rising again with deathless splendor over the Realm of the Limitless. Believers are encouraged to stand firm and arise for the triumph of Bahá'u'lláh's Cause.

5. What celestial call is proclaimed in Bahá'u'lláh's Most Holy Book, as mentioned in the passage?

Answer: The celestial call proclaims, "Let not your hearts be perturbed, O people, when the glory of My Presence is withdrawn," assuring divine assistance and support.

– 6 –

O ye peoples of the Kingdom! How many a soul expended all its span of life in worship, endured the mortification of the flesh, longed to gain an entry into the Kingdom, and yet failed, while ye, with neither toil nor pain nor self-denial, have won the prize and entered in.

It is even as in the time of the Messiah, when the Pharisees and the pious were left without a portion, while Peter, John and Andrew, given neither to pious worship nor ascetic practice, won the day. Wherefore, thank ye God for setting upon your heads the crown of glory everlasting, for granting unto you this immeasurable grace.

The time hath come when, as a thank-offering for this bestowal, ye should grow in faith and constancy as day followeth day, and should draw ever nearer to the Lord, your God, becoming

magnetized to such a degree, and so aflame, that your holy melodies in praise of the Beloved will reach upward to the Company on high; and that each one of you, even as a nightingale in this rose garden of God, will glorify the Lord of Hosts, and become the teacher of all who dwell on earth.

Summary:

The passage encourages gratitude for the bestowed grace, contrasting the toil of some who failed with the ease of those who succeeded. It likens the current time to the era of the Messiah, highlighting that dedicated worship and ascetic practice are not prerequisites for spiritual success. Instead, the emphasis is on growing in faith, constancy, and drawing nearer to God. Believers are urged to become so spiritually charged that their praises reach the heavenly realm, likening them to nightingales in God's rose garden, teaching and glorifying the Lord.

Key Points:

1. Gratitude for the bestowed grace without toil or ascetic practice.
2. Comparison to the time of the Messiah when the pious failed, contrasting with the success of those like Peter, John, and Andrew.
3. Emphasis on growing in faith and constancy as an expression of thankfulness.
4. Encouragement to draw nearer to the Lord and become spiritually magnetized.
5. Imagery of believers as nightingales in God's rose garden, glorifying the Lord and becoming teachers to all who dwell on earth.

Questions and Answers:

1. What contrast is presented regarding spiritual success in the passage?

Answer: The passage contrasts the toil and ascetic practice of some who failed with the ease of those who succeeded in winning the prize.

2. How is the current time likened to the era of the Messiah?

Answer: The current time is likened to the era of the Messiah, where the pious and Pharisees failed, and individuals like Peter, John, and Andrew succeeded.

3. What is the emphasis for believers in the passage?

Answer: Believers are encouraged to grow in faith and constancy, drawing nearer to the Lord as an expression of gratitude for the bestowed grace.

4. How are believers urged to become spiritually charged?

Answer: Believers are urged to become so spiritually charged that their holy melodies and praises reach upward to the Company on high.

5. What imagery is used to describe believers in the passage?

Answer: Believers are likened to nightingales in God's rose garden, glorifying the Lord and becoming teachers to all who dwell on earth.

O ye spiritual friends of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá! A trusted messenger hath arrived and hath, in the world of the spirit, delivered a message from God’s loved ones. This auspicious courier bringeth fragrances of great ardor and wafteth the life-giving breezes of the love of God. He maketh the heart to dance

for joy and filleth up the soul with an ecstasy of love and rapture. So intensely hath the glory of Divine Unity penetrated souls and hearts that all are now bound one to another with heavenly ties, and all are even as a single heart, a single soul. Wherefore reflections of the spirit and impressions of the Divine are now mirrored clear and sharp in the deep heart's core. I beg of God to strengthen these spiritual bonds as day followeth day, and make this mystic oneness to shine ever more brightly, until at last all shall be as troops marshaled together beneath the banner of the Covenant within the sheltering shade of the Word of God; that they may strive with all their might until universal fellowship, close and warm, and unalloyed love, and spiritual relationships, will connect all the hearts in the world. Then will all humankind, because of this fresh and dazzling bounty, be gathered in a single homeland. Then will conflict and dissension vanish from the face of the earth, then will mankind be cradled in love for the beauty of the All-Glorious. Discord will change to accord, dissension to unison. The roots of malevolence will be torn out, the basis of aggression destroyed. The bright rays of union will obliterate the darkness of limitations, and the splendors of heaven will make the human heart to be even as a mine veined richly with the love of God.

O ye loved ones of the Lord! This is the hour when ye must associate with all the earth's peoples in extreme kindness and love, and be to them the signs and tokens of God's great mercy. Ye must become the very soul of the world, the living spirit in the body of the children of men. In this wondrous Age, at this time when the Ancient Beauty, the Most Great Name, bearing unnumbered gifts, hath risen above the horizon of the world, the Word of God hath infused such awesome power into the inmost essence of humankind that He hath stripped men's human qualities of all effect, and hath, with His all-conquering might, unified the peoples in a vast sea of oneness.

Now is the time for the lovers of God to raise high the banners of unity, to intone, in the assemblages of the world, the verses of friendship and love and to demonstrate to all that the grace of God is one. Thus will the tabernacles of holiness be upraised on the summits of the earth, gathering all peoples into the protective shadow of the Word of Oneness. This great bounty will dawn over the world at the time when the lovers of God shall arise to carry out His Teachings, and to scatter far and wide the fresh, sweet scents of universal love.

In every dispensation, there hath been the commandment of fellowship and love, but it was a commandment limited to the community of those in mutual agreement, not to the dissident foe. In this wondrous age, however, praised be God, the commandments of God are not delimited, not restricted to any one group of people, rather have all the friends been commanded to show forth fellowship and love, consideration and generosity and loving-kindness to every community on earth. Now must the lovers of God arise to carry out these instructions of His: let them be kindly fathers to the children of the human race, and compassionate brothers to the youth, and self-denying offspring to those bent with years. The meaning of this is that ye must show forth tenderness and love to every human being, even to your enemies, and welcome them all with unalloyed friendship, good cheer, and loving-kindness. When ye meet with cruelty and persecution at another's hands, keep faith with him; when malevolence is directed your way, respond with a friendly heart. To the spears and arrows rained upon you, expose your breasts for a target mirror-bright; and in return for curses, taunts and wounding words, show forth abounding love. Thus will all peoples witness the power of the Most Great Name, and every nation acknowledge the might of the Ancient Beauty, and see how He hath toppled down the walls of discord, and how surely He hath guided all the peoples of the earth to oneness; how He hath lit man's world, and made this earth of dust to send forth streams of light.

These human creatures are even as children, they are brash and unconcerned. These children must be reared with infinite, loving care, and tenderly fostered in the embraces of mercy, so that

they may taste the spiritual honey-sweetness of God's love; that they may become like unto candles shedding their beams across this darksome world, and may clearly perceive what blazing crowns of glory the Most Great Name, the Ancient Beauty, hath set on the brows of His beloved, what bounties He hath bestowed on the hearts of those He holdeth dear, what a love He hath cast into the breasts of humankind, and what treasures of friendship He hath made to appear amongst all men.

O God, my God! Aid Thou Thy trusted servants to have loving and tender hearts. Help them to spread, amongst all the nations of the earth, the light of guidance that cometh from the Company on high. Verily Thou art the Strong, the Powerful, the Mighty, the All-Subduing, the Ever-Giving. Verily Thou art the Generous, the Gentle, the Tender, the Most Bountiful.

Summary:

The passage emphasizes the importance of unity, love, and fellowship among the followers of God. It describes a spiritual bond that unifies souls, creating a mystic oneness. The believers are urged to strengthen these bonds, becoming like nightingales in God's rose garden, glorifying the Lord and teaching all who dwell on earth. The passage envisions a time when universal fellowship and love will connect all hearts, eradicating conflict and dissension. Believers are called to be the signs of God's mercy, demonstrating kindness, love, and compassion to all people. The teachings

encourage believers to show tenderness and love even to enemies, responding to hostility with abounding love and understanding.

Key Points:

1. Importance of unity, love, and fellowship among followers of God.
2. Description of a mystic oneness that unifies souls and creates a deep spiritual bond.
3. Encouragement to strengthen spiritual bonds and become like nightingales glorifying the Lord.
4. Vision of a time when universal fellowship and love will connect all hearts, eliminating conflict.
5. Call for believers to be signs of God's mercy, demonstrating kindness, love, and compassion to all people.
6. Teaching believers to show tenderness and love even to enemies, responding with abounding love.

Questions and Answers:

1. What does the passage emphasize regarding the relationship among followers of God?

Answer: The passage emphasizes the importance of unity, love, and fellowship among the followers of God.

2. How is the mystic oneness described in the passage?

Answer: The mystic oneness is described as a deep spiritual bond that unifies souls, creating a single heart and soul among believers.

3. What is the envisioned outcome of universal fellowship and love?

Answer: The envisioned outcome is a time when universal fellowship and love will connect all hearts, eliminating conflict and dissension.

4. How are believers urged to respond to hostility and persecution?

Answer: Believers are urged to respond with tenderness and love, even to enemies, exposing their hearts to hostility while responding with abounding love.

5. What is the role of believers according to the passage?

Answer: Believers are called to be signs of God's mercy, demonstrating kindness, love, and compassion to all people, fostering a spirit of unity and fellowship.

– 8 –

O ye beloved of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá and ye handmaids of the Merciful! It is early morning, and the reviving winds of the Abhá Paradise are blowing over all creation, but they can stir only the pure of heart, and only the pure sense can detect their fragrance. Only the perceiving eye beholdeth the rays of the sun; only the listening ear can hear the singing of the Concourse on high. Although the plentiful rains of spring, the bestowals of Heaven, pour down upon all things, they can only fructify good soil; they love not brackish ground, where no results of all the bounty can be shown.

Today the soft and holy breathings of the Abhá Realm are passing over every land, but only the pure in heart draw nigh and derive a benefit therefrom. It is the hope of this wronged soul that from the grace of the Self-Subsistent One and by the manifest power of the Word of God, the heads of the unmindful may be cleared, that they may perceive these sweet savors which blow from secret rosebeds of the spirit.

O ye friends of God! True friends are even as skilled physicians, and the Teachings of God are as healing balm, a medicine for the conscience of man. They clear the head, so that a man can breathe them in and delight in their sweet fragrance. They waken those who sleep. They bring awareness to the unheeding, and a portion to the outcast, and to the hopeless, hope.

If in this day a soul shall act according to the precepts and the counsels of God, he will serve as a divine physician to mankind, and like the trump of Isráfil,¹ he will call the dead of this contingent world to life; for the confirmations of the Abhá Realm are never interrupted, and such a virtuous soul hath, to befriend him, the unfailing help of the Company on high. Thus shall a sorry gnat become an eagle in the fullness of his strength, and a feeble sparrow change to a royal falcon in the heights of ancient glory.

Wherefore, look not on the degree of your capacity, ask not if you are worthy of the task: rest ye your hopes on the help and loving-kindness, the favors and bestowals of Bahá'u'lláh—may my soul be offered up for His friends! Urge on the steed of high endeavor over the field of sacrifice, and carry away from this wide arena the prize of divine grace.

O ye handmaids of the merciful Lord! How many queens of this world laid down their heads on a pillow of dust and disappeared. No fruit was left of them, no trace, no sign, not even their names. For them, no more granting of bestowals; for them, no more living at all. Not so the handmaids who ministered at the Threshold of God; these have shone forth like glittering stars in the skies of ancient glory, shedding their splendors across all the reaches of time. These have fulfilled their dearest hopes in the Abhá Paradise; they have tasted the honey of reunion in the congregation of the Lord. Such souls as these profited from their existence here on earth: they plucked the fruit of life. As for the rest, “There surely came upon them a time when they were a thing not spoken of.”

O ye lovers of this wronged one! Cleanse ye your eyes, so that ye behold no man as different from yourselves. See ye no strangers; rather see all men as friends, for love and unity come hard when ye fix your gaze on otherness. And in this new and wondrous age, the Holy Writings say that we must be at one with every people; that we must see neither harshness nor injustice, neither malevolence, nor hostility, nor hate, but rather turn our eyes toward the heaven of ancient glory. For each of the creatures is a sign of God, and it was by the grace of the Lord and His power that each did step into the world; therefore they are not strangers, but in the family; not aliens, but friends, and to be treated as such.

Wherefore must the loved ones of God associate in affectionate fellowship with stranger and friend alike, showing forth to all the utmost loving-kindness, disregarding the degree of their capacity, never asking whether they deserve to be loved. In every instance let the friends be considerate and infinitely kind. Let them never be defeated by the malice of the people, by their aggression and their hate, no matter how intense. If others hurl their darts against you, offer them milk and honey in return; if they poison your lives, sweeten their souls; if they injure you, teach them how to be comforted; if they inflict a wound upon you, be a balm to their sores; if they sting you, hold to their lips a refreshing cup.

O God, my God! These are Thy feeble servants; they are Thy loyal bondsmen and Thy handmaidens, who have bowed themselves down before Thine exalted Utterance and humbled themselves at Thy Threshold of light, and borne witness to Thy oneness through which the Sun hath been made to shine in midday splendor. They have listened to the summons Thou didst raise from out Thy hidden Realm, and with hearts quivering with love and rapture, they have responded to Thy call.

O Lord, shower upon them all the outpourings of Thy mercy, rain down upon them all the waters of Thy grace. Make them to grow as beauteous plants in the garden of heaven, and from the full and brimming clouds of Thy bestowals and out of the deep pools of Thine abounding grace make Thou this garden to flower and keep it ever green and lustrous, ever fresh and shimmering and fair.

Thou art verily the Mighty, the Exalted, the Powerful, He Who alone, in the heavens and on the earth, abideth unchanged. There is none other God save Thee, the Lord of manifest tokens and signs.

Summary:

The passage encourages believers to be receptive to the spiritual influences of the Abhá Paradise, emphasizing that only the pure of heart can fully benefit from these divine breezes. It draws analogies to the effect of rain on good soil and speaks of the hope for enlightenment to clear the minds of those currently unmindful. True friends of God are likened to skilled physicians, and the Teachings of God are described as a healing balm for the conscience. Believers are urged to act according to divine precepts, serving as instruments for the spiritual awakening of others. The

passage envisions virtuous souls transcending their perceived limitations with the help of divine confirmations, transforming into powerful forces for good.

Key Points:

1. The reviving winds of the Abhá Paradise can only benefit the pure of heart.
2. Soft and holy breathings of the Abhá Realm are passing over every land, benefiting only those who are pure in heart.
3. The analogy of rain on good soil and the hope for the enlightenment of the unmindful.
4. True friends of God are compared to skilled physicians, and the Teachings of God are healing balm.
5. Believers are urged to act according to divine precepts, serving as divine physicians to mankind.
6. Virtuous souls can transcend perceived limitations with the help of divine confirmations.

Questions and Answers:

1. Who can fully benefit from the spiritual influences of the Abhá Paradise according to the passage?

Answer: Only the pure of heart can fully benefit from the spiritual influences of the Abhá Paradise.

2. How are true friends of God described in the passage?

Answer: True friends of God are likened to skilled physicians, and the Teachings of God are described as a healing balm for the conscience.

3. What is the envisioned outcome for virtuous souls who act according to divine precepts?

Answer: Virtuous souls, with the help of divine confirmations, can transcend perceived limitations and become powerful forces for good.

4. How are believers urged to respond to hostility and persecution?

Answer: Believers are urged to respond with tenderness and love, even to enemies, offering kindness in return for hostility.

5. What is the analogy used to describe the impact of the Teachings of God?

Answer: The Teachings of God are likened to a healing balm for the conscience, clearing the head and delighting in their sweet fragrance.

– 9 –

O thou whose heart overfloweth with love for the Lord! I address thee from this consecrated spot, to gladden thy bosom with mine epistle to thee, for this is such a letter as maketh the heart of him who believeth in God's oneness to wing its flight toward the summits of bliss.

Thank thou God for having enabled thee to enter into His Kingdom of might. Erelong will thy Lord's bounties descend upon thee, one following the other, and He will make of thee a sign for every seeker after truth.

Hold thou fast to the Covenant of thy Lord, and as the days go by, increase thy store of love for His beloved ones. Bend thou with tenderness over the servitors of the All-Merciful, that thou mayest hoist the sail of love upon the ark of peace that moveth across the seas of life. Let nothing grieve thee, and be thou angered at none. It behooveth thee to be content with the Will of God, and a true and loving and trusted friend to all the peoples of the earth, without any exceptions whatever.

This is the quality of the sincere, the way of the saints, the emblem of those who believe in the unity of God, and the raiment of the people of Bahá.

Thank thou and bless thou the Lord for He hath allowed thee to offer Him the Right of God.¹ This is verily a special favor on His part, for thee; praise Him then for this commandment that is set forth in the Scriptures of thy Lord, of Him that is the Ancient of Days.

Verily is He the Loving, the Tender, the Ever-Bestowing.

Summary:

The passage is a letter expressing joy and encouragement to someone overflowing with love for the Lord. The recipient is reminded to be grateful for entering the Kingdom of God and is assured that divine bounties will descend upon them. Emphasis is placed on holding fast to the Covenant, increasing love for God's beloved ones, and being a compassionate friend to all. The letter

encourages contentment with the Will of God and reflects on the special favor of offering the Right of God.

Key Points:

1. Introduction expressing joy and addressing the recipient from a consecrated spot.
2. Gratitude for entering the Kingdom of God and assurance of divine bounties to come.
3. Emphasis on holding fast to the Covenant and increasing love for God's beloved ones.
4. Encouragement to be a compassionate friend to all people without exceptions.
5. Call for contentment with the Will of God and reflection on the special favor of offering the Right of God.
6. Closing with praise for the Lord's loving and tender attributes.

Questions and Answers:

1. What is the main message conveyed in the letter?

Answer: The main message is one of joy, encouragement, and gratitude for entering the Kingdom of God, with an assurance of divine bounties.

2. What is the recipient urged to hold fast to?

Answer: The recipient is urged to hold fast to the Covenant of the Lord.

3. What qualities are emphasized for the recipient to embody?

Answer: The recipient is encouraged to increase love for God's beloved ones and be a compassionate friend to all without exceptions.

4. How is the recipient advised to respond to life's challenges?

Answer: The recipient is advised to be content with the Will of God, letting nothing grieve them, and not being angered at anyone.

5. What is the specific favor mentioned in the passage, and why is it considered special?

Answer: The specific favor mentioned is the opportunity to offer the Right of God. It is considered special as it is described as a commandment set forth in the Scriptures of the Lord.

– 10 –

O thou dear handmaid of God! Thy letter hath been received and its contents noted. Thou didst ask for a rule whereby to guide thy life.

Believe thou in God, and keep thine eyes fixed upon the exalted Kingdom; be thou enamored of the Abhá Beauty; stand thou firm in the Covenant; yearn thou to ascend into the Heaven of the Universal Light. Be thou severed from this world, and reborn through the sweet scents of holiness that blow from the realm of the All-Highest. Be thou a summoner to love, and be thou kind to all the human race. Love thou the children of men and share in their sorrows. Be thou of those who foster peace. Offer thy friendship, be worthy of trust. Be thou a balm to every sore, be thou a medicine for every ill. Bind thou the souls together. Recite thou the verses of guidance. Be engaged in the worship of thy Lord, and rise up to lead the people aright. Loose thy tongue and teach, and let thy face be bright with the fire of God's love. Rest thou not for a moment, seek thou to draw no easeful breath. Thus mayest thou become a sign and symbol of God's love, and a banner of His grace.

Summary:

The letter provides guidance on living a spiritual life and outlines key principles to follow. It emphasizes belief in God, focus on the exalted Kingdom, love for the Abhá Beauty, and standing firm in the Covenant. The recipient is encouraged to be severed from the material world, reborn through holiness, and serve as a summoner to love. Kindness, trustworthiness, fostering peace, offering friendship, and being a source of healing are highlighted. The letter calls for engagement in worship, leading people aright, teaching, and being a bright symbol of God's love.

Key Points:

1. Introduction acknowledging the receipt of the letter and its contents.
2. Core principles to guide life:
 - a. Belief in God.
 - b. Focus on the exalted Kingdom.
 - c. Enamoration of the Abhá Beauty.
 - d. Standing firm in the Covenant.
3. Spiritual practices:
 - a. Yearning to ascend into the Heaven of the Universal Light.
 - b. Being severed from the material world.
 - c. Rebirth through the sweet scents of holiness.
 - d. Engagement in worship.
4. Ethical conduct and service to others:
 - a. Being a summoner to love.
 - b. Kindness to all of humanity.
 - c. Sharing in the sorrows of others.
 - d. Fostering peace and offering friendship.
 - e. Trustworthiness and being a balm for every sore.
5. Active involvement in promoting spiritual principles:
 - a. Reciting the verses of guidance.
 - b. Leading people aright.
 - c. Being a bright symbol of God's love.
 - d. Continuous effort and not resting for a moment.

Questions and Answers:

1. What are the core principles emphasized in the letter?

Answer: The core principles emphasized are belief in God, focus on the exalted Kingdom, enamoration of the Abhá Beauty, and standing firm in the Covenant.

2. What spiritual practices are recommended?

Answer: The recommended spiritual practices include yearning to ascend into the Heaven of the Universal Light, being severed from the material world, rebirth through holiness, and active engagement in worship.

3. What ethical conduct is encouraged towards others?

Answer: The ethical conduct encouraged includes being a summoner to love, showing kindness to all of humanity, sharing in the sorrows of others, fostering peace, offering friendship, and being trustworthy.

4. How is the recipient advised to be a source of healing?

Answer: The recipient is advised to be a balm for every sore, serving as a medicine for every ill, and actively working towards binding souls together.

5. What is the call to action regarding promoting spiritual principles?

Answer: The call to action includes reciting the verses of guidance, leading people aright, being a bright symbol of God's love, and maintaining continuous effort without resting for a moment.

– 11 –

Service to the friends is service to the Kingdom of God, and consideration shown to the poor is one of the greatest teachings of God.

Summary:

The statement emphasizes that serving the friends (believers) is synonymous with serving the Kingdom of God. Additionally, it highlights the significance of showing consideration and assistance to the poor as a fundamental teaching of God.

Key Points:**1. Equating Service to Friends with Service to the Kingdom:**

- The primary message is that serving the friends (believers) is a form of service to the Kingdom of God.
- Implicit in this point is the idea that acts of service to individuals within the community contribute to the advancement of God's divine purpose.

2. Consideration for the Poor as a Profound Teaching:

- The statement singles out consideration for the poor as one of the most significant teachings of God.
- This underscores the importance of compassion and assistance toward those in need, aligning with the spiritual teachings.

Questions and Answers:

1. What does the statement suggest about the connection between service to friends and the Kingdom of God?

- Answer: The statement suggests that service to friends is considered synonymous with service to the Kingdom of God, implying that acts of kindness and assistance within the community contribute to the divine purpose.

2. What specific teaching of God is highlighted in relation to the poor?

- Answer: The statement underscores the importance of showing consideration to the poor as one of the greatest teachings of God, emphasizing the significance of compassion and assistance toward those in need.

3. How does the concept of service to the friends align with spiritual principles?

- Answer: Service to the friends is presented as a manifestation of service to the Kingdom of God, indicating that acts of kindness and assistance within the community are reflective of spiritual principles.

4. What does the statement imply about the value of considering and helping the poor?

- Answer: The statement implies that considering and helping the poor is highly valuable and holds a central place in the teachings of God, emphasizing the importance of compassion and assistance toward those who are less fortunate.

5. In what way does the statement connect service to individuals with broader divine purposes?

- Answer: The statement implies that acts of service to individuals within the community contribute to broader divine purposes, suggesting that the well-being and assistance provided to friends align with the larger goals of the Kingdom of God.

Know thou of a certainty that Love is the secret of God's holy Dispensation, the manifestation of the All-Merciful, the fountain of spiritual outpourings. Love is heaven's kindly light, the Holy Spirit's eternal breath that vivifieth the human soul. Love is the cause of God's revelation unto man, the vital bond inherent, in accordance with the divine creation, in the realities of things. Love is the one means that ensureth true felicity both in this world and the next. Love is the light that guideth in darkness, the living link that uniteth God with man, that assureth the progress of every illumined soul. Love is the most great law that ruleth this mighty and heavenly cycle, the unique power that bindeth together the divers elements of this material world, the supreme magnetic force that directeth the movements of the spheres in the celestial realms. Love revealeth with unfailing and limitless power the mysteries latent in the universe. Love is the spirit of life unto the adorned body of mankind, the establisher of true civilization in this mortal world, and the shedder of imperishable glory upon every high-aiming race and nation.

Whatsoever people is graciously favored therewith by God, its name shall surely be magnified and extolled by the Concourse from on high, by the company of angels, and the denizens of the Abhá Kingdom. And whatsoever people turneth its heart away from this Divine Love—the revelation of the Merciful—shall err grievously, shall fall into despair, and be utterly destroyed. That people shall be denied all refuge, shall become even as the vilest creatures of the earth, victims of degradation and shame.

O ye beloved of the Lord! Strive to become the manifestations of the love of God, the lamps of divine guidance shining amongst the kindreds of the earth with the light of love and concord.

All hail to the revealers of this glorious light!

Summary:

The passage underscores the centrality of love in God's dispensation, describing it as a vital force, a source of spiritual illumination, and the ultimate law governing the universe. It contrasts the

destiny of those who embrace divine love with the dire consequences for those who turn away. The believers are called to embody God's love, becoming beacons of divine guidance for humanity.

Key Points:

1. Love as the Secret of God's Dispensation:

- Describes love as the secret and manifestation of God's holy dispensation.
- Portrays love as heaven's light and the eternal breath of the Holy Spirit.

2. Love's Significance in This World and the Next:

- Affirms that love ensures true felicity in both this world and the afterlife.
- Emphasizes love as the guiding light in darkness and the vital bond between God and humanity.

3. Love as the Supreme Law and Magnetic Force:

- Declares love as the great law ruling the heavenly cycle.
- Describes love as the supreme magnetic force directing celestial movements.

4. Consequences of Embracing or Rejecting Love:

- Promises magnification and exaltation for those favored with divine love.
- Warns of grievous error, despair, and destruction for those who turn away.

5. Call to Manifest Divine Love:

- Encourages believers to strive to become manifestations of God's love.
- Urges them to shine as lamps of divine guidance, spreading love and concord.

Questions and Answers:

1. What role does love play in God's dispensation, according to the passage?

- Answer: Love is depicted as the secret, light, and eternal breath of God's dispensation, essential for spiritual outpourings.

2. How does the passage describe the consequences for those who embrace divine love?

- Answer: Those who embrace divine love are promised magnification and exaltation, with their names celebrated by heavenly beings.

3. What is the destiny of those who turn away from divine love, according to the passage?

- Answer: Those who reject divine love are warned of grievous error, despair, and utter destruction. They shall be denied refuge and face degradation.

4. What is the believers' role in response to the message about divine love?

- Answer: Believers are called to strive to become manifestations of God's love, acting as lamps of divine guidance and spreading love and concord.

5. How does the passage characterize love's influence on the universe and human civilization?

- Answer: Love is presented as the supreme law governing the universe, a magnetic force directing celestial movements, and the spirit of life for humanity, establishing true civilization.

O thou daughter of the Kingdom! Thy letter dated 5 December 1918 was received. It contained the good news that the friends of God and the maidservants of the Merciful have gathered in summer at Green Acre, have been engaged day and night in the commemoration of God, have served the oneness of the world of humanity, have shown love to all religions, have remained aloof from every religious prejudice and have been kind to all people. The divine religions must be the cause of oneness among men, and the means of unity and love; they must promulgate universal peace, free man from every prejudice, bestow joy and gladness, exercise kindness to all men and do away with every difference and distinction. Just as Bahá'u'lláh addressing the world of humanity saith: "O people! Ye are the fruits of one tree and the leaves of one branch." At most it is this, that some souls are ignorant, they must be educated; some are sick, they must be healed; some are still of tender age, they must be helped to attain maturity, and the utmost kindness must be shown to them. This is the conduct of the people of Bahá.

I hope that thy brothers and sisters will all become the well-wishers of the world of mankind.

Summary:

The letter encourages unity among believers, emphasizing the role of divine religions in fostering oneness and eliminating prejudice. It praises the gathering of the friends of God at Green Acre, commending their devotion, service, and love for all religions. The central theme is the

transformative power of divine teachings in promoting peace, joy, and kindness, with a call to educate, heal, and support those in need.

Key Points:

1. Commendation for the Gathering:

- Acknowledges the gathering of the friends of God and maidservants of the Merciful at Green Acre.
- Highlights their engagement in the commemoration of God and service to the oneness of humanity.

2. Role of Divine Religions:

- Stresses that divine religions should be a source of oneness among humanity.
- Emphasizes their role in promoting universal peace, eliminating prejudice, and fostering love.

3. Quoting Bahá'u'lláh:

- Quotes Bahá'u'lláh's statement: "O people! Ye are the fruits of one tree and the leaves of one branch."
- Reinforces the concept of the fundamental unity of humanity.

4. Conduct of the People of Bahá:

- Describes the conduct of the people of Bahá as educating the ignorant, healing the sick, and helping the young attain maturity.
- Highlights the need for utmost kindness toward those who are still developing.

5. Hope for Well-Wishing:

- Expresses hope that the brothers and sisters of the recipient will become well-wishers of the world of mankind.
- Encourages a spirit of goodwill, emphasizing the transformative impact of such an approach.

Questions and Answers:

1. What commendation does the letter offer regarding the gathering at Green Acre?
- Answer: The letter commends the friends of God and maidservants of the Merciful for their gathering at Green Acre, their devotion, and service to the oneness of humanity.
2. What is the emphasized role of divine religions according to the letter?
- Answer: Divine religions should be a source of oneness, promoting universal peace, eliminating prejudice, and fostering love among humanity.
3. What concept does Bahá'u'lláh's quote "O people! Ye are the fruits of one tree and the leaves of one branch" reinforce?
- Answer: The quote reinforces the concept of the fundamental unity of humanity, emphasizing the interconnectedness of all people.
4. How does the letter describe the conduct of the people of Bahá in relation to education, healing, and support?

- Answer: The people of Bahá are described as engaging in the education of the ignorant, healing the sick, and helping the young attain maturity, demonstrating utmost kindness.

5. What is the expressed hope in the letter regarding the recipient's brothers and sisters?

- Answer: The letter expresses hope that the recipient's brothers and sisters will become well-wishers of the world of mankind, encouraging a spirit of goodwill and transformative impact.

– 14 –

O ye two blessed souls! Your letters were received. They showed that ye have investigated the truth and have been freed from imitations and superstitions, that ye observe with your own eyes and not with those of others, hearken with your own ears and not with the ears of others, and discover mysteries with the help of your own consciences and not with those of others. For the imitator saith that such a man hath seen, such a man hath heard, and such a conscience hath discovered; in other words he dependeth upon the sight, the hearing and the conscience of others and hath no will of his own.

Now, praise be to God, ye have shown willpower and have turned to the Sun of Truth. The plain of your hearts hath been illumined by the lights of the Lord of the Kingdom and ye have been led to the straight path, have marched along the road that leadeth to the Kingdom, have entered the Abhá Paradise, and have secured a portion and share of the fruit of the Tree of Life.

Blessed are ye and a goodly home awaiteth you. Upon you be greetings and praise.

Summary:

The letter commends the recipients for investigating the truth, freeing themselves from imitations and superstitions. It emphasizes the importance of personal observation and independent thinking. The recipients are praised for turning to the Sun of Truth, having their hearts illumined, and

walking the path to the Kingdom. The letter concludes with blessings and the anticipation of a goodly home for the recipients.

Key Points:

1. Commendation for Investigation:

- Acknowledges the recipients' investigation of the truth.
- Emphasizes their freedom from imitations and superstitions.

2. Independent Investigation:

- Highlights the recipients' ability to observe with their own eyes and hear with their own ears.
- Encourages reliance on personal conscience rather than depending on others.

3. Turn to the Sun of Truth:

- Commends the recipients for turning to the Sun of Truth.
- Describes the illumination of the plain of their hearts by the lights of the Lord of the Kingdom.

4. Journey to the Kingdom:

- Acknowledges the recipients' march along the road leading to the Kingdom.
- Indicates that they have entered the Abhá Paradise and secured a portion of the Tree of Life.

5. Blessings and Anticipation:

- Blesses the recipients and extends greetings and praise.
- Expresses anticipation of a goodly home awaiting them.

Questions and Answers:

1. What does the letter commend the recipients for?

- Answer: The letter commends the recipients for investigating the truth and freeing themselves from imitations and superstitions.

2. What aspect of observation does the letter emphasize?

- Answer: The letter emphasizes the recipients' ability to observe with their own eyes and hear with their own ears, promoting independence in observation.

3. What is the significance of turning to the "Sun of Truth" in the letter?

- Answer: Turning to the "Sun of Truth" signifies the recipients' alignment with divine guidance and enlightenment, leading to the illumination of their hearts.

4. What does the letter indicate about the recipients' journey?

- Answer: The letter indicates that the recipients have marched along the road leading to the Kingdom, entered the Abhá Paradise, and secured a portion of the Tree of Life.

5. How does the letter conclude in relation to the recipients?

- Answer: The letter concludes with blessings, greetings, praise for the recipients, and an anticipation of a goodly home awaiting them.

O captive of the love of God! The letter which thou didst write at the time of thy departure hath been received. It brought me joy; and it is my hope that thine inner eye may be opened wide, so that unto thee the very core of the divine mysteries may be disclosed.

Thou didst begin thy letter with a blessed phrase, saying: "I am a Christian." O would that all were truly Christian! It is easy to be a Christian on the tongue, but hard to be a true one. Today some five hundred million souls are Christian, but the real Christian is very rare: he is that soul from whose comely face there shineth the splendor of Christ, and who showeth forth the perfections of the Kingdom; this is a matter of great moment, for to be a Christian is to embody every excellence there is. I hope that thou, too, shalt become a true Christian. Praise thou God that at last, through the divine teachings, thou hast obtained both sight and insight to the highest degree, and hast become firmly rooted in certitude and faith. It is my hope that others as well will achieve illumined eyes and hearing ears, and attain to everlasting life: that these many rivers, each flowing along in diverse and separated beds, will find their way back to the circumambient sea, and merge together and rise up in a single wave of surging oneness; that the unity of truth, through the power of God, will make these illusory differences to vanish away. This is the one essential: for if unity be gained, all other problems will disappear of themselves.

O honored lady! In accordance with the divine teachings in this glorious dispensation we should not belittle anyone and call him ignorant, saying: "You know not, but I know." Rather, we should look upon others with respect, and when attempting to explain and demonstrate, we should speak as if we are investigating the truth, saying: "Here these things are before us. Let us investigate to determine where and in what form the truth can be found." The teacher should not consider himself as learned and others ignorant. Such a thought breedeth pride, and pride is not conducive to influence. The teacher should not see in himself any superiority; he should speak with the utmost kindness, lowliness and humility, for such speech exerteth influence and educateth the souls.

O honored lady! For a single purpose were the Prophets, each and all, sent down to earth; for this was Christ made manifest, for this did Bahá'u'lláh raise up the call of the Lord: that the world of man should become the world of God, this nether realm the Kingdom, this darkness light, this satanic wickedness all the virtues of heaven—and unity, fellowship and love be won for the whole human race, that the organic unity should reappear and the bases of discord be destroyed and life everlasting and grace everlasting become the harvest of mankind.

O honored lady! Look about thee at the world: here unity, mutual attraction, gathering together, engender life, but disunity and inharmony spell death. When thou dost consider all phenomena, thou wilt see that every created thing hath come into being through the mingling of many elements, and once this collectivity of elements is dissolved, and this harmony of components is dissevered, the life form is wiped out.

O honored lady! In cycles gone by, though harmony was established, yet, owing to the absence of means, the unity of all mankind could not have been achieved. Continents remained widely divided, nay even among the peoples of one and the same continent association and interchange of thought were wellnigh impossible. Consequently intercourse, understanding and unity amongst all the peoples and kindreds of the earth were unattainable. In this day, however, means of communication have multiplied, and the five continents of the earth have virtually merged into one. And for everyone it is now easy to travel to any land, to associate and exchange views with its peoples, and to become familiar, through publications, with the conditions, the religious beliefs and the thoughts of all men. In like manner all the members of the human family, whether peoples or governments, cities or villages, have become increasingly interdependent. For none is self-sufficiency any longer possible, inasmuch as political ties unite all peoples and nations, and the

bonds of trade and industry, of agriculture and education, are being strengthened every day. Hence the unity of all mankind can in this day be achieved. Verily this is none other but one of the wonders of this wondrous age, this glorious century. Of this past ages have been deprived, for this century—the century of light—hath been endowed with unique and unprecedented glory, power and illumination. Hence the miraculous unfolding of a fresh marvel every day. Eventually it will be seen how bright its candles will burn in the assemblage of man.

Behold how its light is now dawning upon the world's darkened horizon. The first candle is unity in the political realm, the early glimmerings of which can now be discerned. The second candle is unity of thought in world undertakings, the consummation of which will ere long be witnessed. The third candle is unity in freedom which will surely come to pass. The fourth candle is unity in religion which is the cornerstone of the foundation itself, and which, by the power of God, will be revealed in all its splendor. The fifth candle is the unity of nations—a unity which in this century will be securely established, causing all the peoples of the world to regard themselves as citizens of one common fatherland. The sixth candle is unity of races, making of all that dwell on earth peoples and kindreds of one race. The seventh candle is unity of language, i.e., the choice of a universal tongue in which all peoples will be instructed and converse. Each and every one of these will inevitably come to pass, inasmuch as the power of the Kingdom of God will aid and assist in their realization.

Summary:

The letter addresses a Christian, expressing joy for their spiritual journey. It encourages embodying the teachings rather than mere verbal declaration. It stresses the rarity of true Christianity and emphasizes the significance of living its principles. The hope for unity among religions and the

transformative power of divine teachings are highlighted. The letter closes with a call for humility and respect, promoting unity, harmony, and the ultimate realization of a world at peace.

Key Points:

1. Praise for Spiritual Journey:

- Commends the recipient for their letter and expresses joy.
- Encourages the recipient's spiritual development and hopes for the disclosure of divine mysteries.

2. True Christianity:

- Highlights the rarity of true Christianity.
- Emphasizes the importance of embodying Christian virtues rather than mere verbal profession.

3. Hope for Unity Among Religions:

- Stresses the transformative power of divine teachings.
- Expresses hope for unity among religions and the elimination of differences.

4. Humility and Respect:

- Advises against belittling others.
- Promotes humility, kindness, and respect in teaching others.

5. Call for Unity and Harmony:

- Describes the purpose of the Prophets as establishing unity and fellowship.
- Encourages the organic unity of humankind and the elimination of discord.

6. Means of Achieving Unity:

- Points out the necessity of unity in the contemporary world.
- Highlights the interdependence of nations and the increased means of communication.

7. Wonders of the Century:

- Acknowledges the unique glory, power, and illumination of the current century.
- Foresees the achievement of unity in various aspects: political, thought, freedom, religion, nations, races, and language.

Questions and Answers:

1. What does the letter emphasize about true Christianity?

- Answer: * The letter emphasizes that true Christianity goes beyond verbal declaration, requiring embodiment of Christian virtues in one's actions.

2. What is highlighted as the purpose of the Prophets in the letter?

- Answer: The purpose of the Prophets is described as establishing unity, fellowship, and the elimination of discord.

3. What aspects of unity are foreseen in the current century according to the letter?

- Answer: The letter foresees unity in various aspects: political, thought, freedom, religion, nations, races, and language.

4. What is encouraged in teaching others, according to the letter?

- Answer: The letter encourages humility, kindness, and respect in teaching others, advising against belittling.

5. What is the significance of the current century according to the letter?

- Answer: The current century is described as endowed with unique glory, power, and illumination, witnessing the achievement of various forms of unity.

– 16 –

O ye illumined loved ones and ye handmaids of the Merciful! At a time when the somber night of ignorance, of neglect of the divine world, of being veiled from God, had overspread the earth, a bright morning dawned and a rising light lit up the eastern sky. Then rose the Sun of Truth and the splendors of the Kingdom were shed over east and west. Those who had eyes to see rejoiced at the glad tidings and cried out: “O blessed, blessed are we!,” and they witnessed the inner reality of all things, and uncovered the mysteries of the Kingdom. Delivered then from their fancies and their doubts, they beheld the light of truth, and so exhilarated did they become from draining the chalice of God’s love, that they utterly forgot the world and their own selves. Dancing for joy they hastened to the place of their own martyrdom and there, where men die for love, they flung away their heads and hearts.

But those with unseeing eyes were astonished at this tumult, and they cried, “Where is the light?” and again, “We see no light! We see no rising sun! Here is no truth. This is but fantasy and nothing more.” Bat-like they fled into the underground dark, and there, to their way of thinking, they found a measure of security and peace.

This, however, is but the beginning of the dawn, and the heat of the rising Orb of Truth is not yet at the fullness of its power. Once the sun hath mounted to high noon, its fires will burn so hot as to stir even the creeping things beneath the earth; and although it is not for them to behold the light, yet will they all be set in frenzied motion by the impact of the heat.

Wherefore, O ye beloved of God, offer up thanks that ye have, in the day of the dawning, turned your faces unto the Light of the World and beheld its splendors. Ye have received a share of the light of truth, ye have enjoyed a portion of those blessings that endure forever; and therefore, as a returning of thanks for this bounty, rest ye not for a moment, sit ye not silent, carry to men’s ears the glad tidings of the Kingdom, spread far and wide the Word of God.

Act in accordance with the counsels of the Lord: that is, rise up in such wise, and with such qualities, as to endow the body of this world with a living soul, and to bring this young child, humanity, to the stage of adulthood. So far as ye are able, ignite a candle of love in every meeting, and with tenderness rejoice and cheer ye every heart. Care for the stranger as for one of your own; show to alien souls the same loving kindness ye bestow upon your faithful friends. Should any come to blows with you, seek to be friends with him; should any stab you to the heart, be ye a healing salve unto his sores; should any taunt and mock at you, meet him with love. Should any heap his blame upon you, praise ye him; should he offer you a deadly poison, give him the choicest honey in exchange; and should he threaten your life, grant him a remedy that will heal him evermore. Should he be pain itself, be ye his medicine; should he be thorns, be ye his roses and sweet herbs. Perchance such ways and words from you will make this darksome world turn bright at last; will make this dusty earth turn heavenly, this devilish prison place become a royal palace of the Lord—so that war and strife will pass and be no more, and love and trust will pitch their

tents on the summits of the world. Such is the essence of God's admonitions; such in sum are the teachings for the Dispensation of Bahá.

Summary:

The letter describes the dawning of the spiritual light in a world shrouded in ignorance. It illustrates the contrast between those who embrace the divine teachings, experience profound spiritual joy, and willingly sacrifice themselves for love, and those who remain in darkness, rejecting the truth. The analogy of the rising sun symbolizes the gradual unfoldment of spiritual awareness. Believers

are urged to be grateful for recognizing the light, share the glad tidings, and embody the teachings in their actions, promoting love, kindness, and unity.

Key Points:

1. Dawning of Spiritual Light:

- Describes a world initially covered by the somber night of ignorance.
- Depicts the rising of the Sun of Truth, bringing the light of the Kingdom to east and west.

2. Two Responses to the Light:

- Illustrates the joyful response of those who embrace the truth, forgetting the world and sacrificing themselves in love.
- Contrasts this with the skepticism and rejection of those who remain in darkness, seeking refuge underground.

3. Analogy of the Rising Sun:

- Presents the unfolding of spiritual awareness as a gradual process, likened to the sun rising to its fullness.

4. Call to Action:

- Encourages believers to be grateful for recognizing the light of truth.
- Urges them to share the glad tidings, spread the Word of God, and act in accordance with divine counsels.

5. Teachings of Love and Unity:

- Advises believers to kindle a candle of love in every meeting.
- Emphasizes qualities like tenderness, rejoicing, caring for strangers, and treating all with love and kindness.
- Encourages responding to negativity with positivity, transforming strife into peace and hatred into love.

Questions and Answers:

1. What does the rising sun symbolize in the letter?

- Answer: The rising sun symbolizes the gradual unfoldment of spiritual awareness and the spreading of the light of the Kingdom.

2. How does the letter describe the two responses to the spiritual light?

- Answer: The letter describes the joyful response of those who embrace the truth, sacrificing themselves in love, and the rejection of those who remain in darkness.

3. What is the analogy used to illustrate the gradual unfoldment of spiritual awareness?

- Answer: The analogy used is the rising of the sun, indicating the gradual process of spiritual awakening.

4. What actions are believers urged to take according to the letter?

- Answer: Believers are urged to be grateful, share the glad tidings, spread the Word of God, and act in accordance with divine counsels.

5. What qualities and actions are emphasized in promoting love and unity?

- Answer: Kindling a candle of love in every meeting, showing tenderness, rejoicing, caring for strangers, responding to negativity with positivity, and transforming hatred into love are emphasized for promoting love and unity.

– 17 –

O ye who are the chosen ones of the Abhá Kingdom! Praise ye the Lord of Hosts for He, riding upon the clouds, hath come down to this world out of the heaven of the invisible realm, so that East and West were lit by the glory of the Sun of Truth, and the call of the Kingdom was raised, and the heralds of the realm above, with melodies of the Concourse on high, sang out the glad tidings of the Coming. Then the whole world of being did quiver for joy, and still the people, even as the Messiah saith, slept on: for the day of the Manifestation, when the Lord of Hosts descended, found them wrapped in the slumber of unknowing. As He saith in the Gospel, My coming is even as when the thief is in the house, and the goodman of the house watcheth not.

From amongst all mankind hath He chosen you, and your eyes have been opened to the light of guidance and your ears attuned to the music of the Company above; and blessed by abounding grace, your hearts and souls have been born into new life. Thank ye and praise ye God that the hand of infinite bestowals hath set upon your heads this gem-studded crown, this crown whose lustrous jewels will forever flash and sparkle down all the reaches of time.

To thank Him for this, make ye a mighty effort, and choose for yourselves a noble goal. Through the power of faith, obey ye the teachings of God, and let all your actions conform to His laws. Read ye *The Hidden Words*, ponder the inner meanings thereof, act in accord therewith. Read, with close attention, the Tablets of Ṭarázát (Ornaments), Kalimát (Words of Paradise), Tajallíyyát (Effulgences), Ishráqát (Splendors), and Bishárát (Glad Tidings), and rise up as ye are bidden in the heavenly teachings. Thus may each one of you be even as a candle casting its light, the center of attraction wherever people come together; and from you, as from a bed of flowers, may sweet scents be shed.

Raise ye a clamor like unto a roaring sea; like a prodigal cloud, rain down the grace of heaven. Lift up your voices and sing out the songs of the Abhá Realm. Quench ye the fires of war, lift high the banners of peace, work for the oneness of humankind and remember that religion is the channel of love unto all peoples. Be ye aware that the children of men are sheep of God and He their loving Shepherd, that He careth tenderly for all His sheep and maketh them to feed in His own green pastures of grace and giveth them to drink from the wellspring of life. Such is the way of the Lord. Such are His bestowals. Such, from among His teachings, is His precept of the oneness of mankind.

The portals of His blessings are opened wide and His signs are published abroad and the glory of truth is blazing forth; inexhaustible are the blessings. Know ye the value of this time. Strive ye with all your hearts, raise up your voices and shout, until this dark world be filled with light, and this narrow place of shadows be widened out, and this dust heap of a fleeting moment be changed into a mirror for the eternal gardens of heaven, and this globe of earth receive its portion of celestial grace.

Then will aggression crumble away, and all that maketh for disunity be destroyed, and the structure of oneness be raised—that the Blessed Tree may cast its shade over east and west, and the Tabernacle of the singleness of man be set up on the high summits, and flags that betoken love and fellowship flutter from their staffs around the world until the sea of truth lift high its waves,

and earth bring forth the roses and sweet herbs of blessings without end, and become from pole to pole the Abhá Paradise.

These are the counsels of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá. It is my hope that out of the bestowals of the Lord of Hosts ye will become the spiritual essence and the very radiance of humankind, binding the hearts of all with bonds of love; that through the power of the Word of God ye will bring to life the dead now buried in the graves of their sensual desires; that ye will, with the rays of the Sun of Truth, restore the sight of those whose inner eye is blind; that ye will bring spiritual healing to the spiritually sick. These things do I hope for, out of the bounties and the bestowals of the Beloved.

At all times do I speak of you and call you to mind. I pray unto the Lord, and with tears I implore Him to rain down all these blessings upon you, and gladden your hearts, and make blissful your souls, and grant you exceeding joy and heavenly delights....

O Thou loving Provider! These souls have hearkened to the summons of the Kingdom, and have gazed upon the glory of the Sun of Truth. They have risen upward to the refreshing skies of love; they are enamored of Thy nature, and they worship Thy beauty. Unto Thee have they turned themselves, speaking together of Thee, seeking out Thy dwelling, and thirsting for the waterbrooks of Thy heavenly realm.

Thou art the Giver, the Bestower, the Ever-Loving.

Summary:

This letter, addressed to the chosen ones of the Abhá Kingdom, emphasizes the transformative power of divine guidance. It urges gratitude for recognizing the light of truth, encourages adherence to God's teachings, and advocates for the spread of love, peace, and unity. The believers are called to be beacons of light, raising their voices, and working for the oneness of humankind.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá expresses hope that the recipients become the essence and radiance of humanity, bringing spiritual healing to those in need.

Key Points:

1. Dawning of Divine Guidance:

- Acknowledges the descent of the Lord of Hosts to bring the light of truth to the world.
- Describes how the world, initially unaware, is compared to those who sleep when a thief is in the house.

2. Special Favor to the Believers:

- Highlights the believers as chosen ones, their eyes opened to guidance, and their souls born into new life.
- Symbolizes this divine favor as a gem-studded crown bestowed upon them.

3. Expression of Gratitude and Action:

- Urges believers to thank and praise God for the bestowed crown.
- Encourages making a mighty effort, choosing noble goals, obeying God's teachings, and acting in accordance with divine laws.

4. Promotion of Love and Unity:

- Advises believers to kindle a candle of love in every meeting and share the glad tidings.
- Calls for a clamor for peace, singing the songs of the Abhá Realm, and working for the oneness of humankind.
- Reminds that religion is a channel of love, emphasizing the precept of the oneness of mankind.

5. Counsels of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá:

- Desires believers to become the essence and radiance of humankind, spiritually healing the sick.
- Expresses hope for their bliss, joy, and heavenly delights, praying for these blessings.
- Concludes with an invocation to God, recognizing the souls who have hearkened to the summons of the Kingdom.

Questions and Answers:

1. How does ‘Abdu’l-Bahá describe the response of the world to the Lord of Hosts' descent?

- Answer: The world is described as initially sleeping or unaware, akin to those who sleep when a thief is in the house.

2. What is the symbolic representation of divine favor in the letter?

- Answer: Divine favor is symbolically represented as a gem-studded crown bestowed upon the believers.

3. What are believers urged to do to express gratitude for the bestowed crown?

- Answer: Believers are urged to make a mighty effort, choose noble goals, obey God's teachings, and act in accordance with divine laws.

4. What actions are believers encouraged to take for the promotion of love and unity?

- Answer: Believers are encouraged to kindle a candle of love in every meeting, share the glad tidings, and work for the oneness of humankind.

5. What does 'Abdu'l-Bahá express hope for regarding the believers in the letter?*

- Answer: 'Abdu'l-Bahá expresses hope that the believers become the essence and radiance of humankind, bringing spiritual healing and experiencing bliss, joy, and heavenly delights.

– 18 –

O thou possessor of a seeing heart! Although, materially speaking, thou art deprived of physical sight, yet, praise be to God, spiritual insight is thine. Thy heart seeth and thy spirit heareth. Bodily sight is subject to a thousand maladies and assuredly will ultimately be lost. Thus no importance should be attached to it. But the sight of the heart is illumined. It discerneth and discovereth the divine Kingdom. It is everlasting and eternal. Praise God, therefore, that the sight of thy heart is illumined, and the hearing of thy mind responsive.

Each of the meetings ye have organized, wherein ye feel heavenly emotions and comprehend realities and significances, is like unto the firmament, and those souls are as resplendent stars shining with the light of guidance.

Happy is the soul that seeketh, in this brilliant era, heavenly teachings, and blessed is the heart which is stirred and attracted by the love of God.

Summary:

This letter is addressed to an individual who, despite being visually impaired, is praised for possessing spiritual insight and an illumined heart. It highlights the significance of the heart's sight, contrasting it with the perishable nature of bodily sight. The recipient is commended for seeking

heavenly teachings and is encouraged to appreciate the value of gatherings where heavenly emotions are felt, likening them to a celestial firmament.

Key Points:

1. Material Deprivation vs. Spiritual Insight:

- Acknowledges the physical deprivation of material sight.
- Emphasizes the spiritual insight possessed by the individual.
- Downplays the importance of bodily sight, which is subject to loss.

2. Eternal Nature of Heart's Sight:

- Describes the sight of the heart as illumined and everlasting.
- Highlights its ability to discern and discover the divine Kingdom.
- Expresses gratitude for the enlightened sight of the heart and the responsive hearing of the mind.

3. Metaphor of Meetings:

- Likens the meetings organized by the individual to the firmament.
- Describes participants as resplendent stars shining with the light of guidance.
- Suggests that these gatherings provide a space for feeling heavenly emotions and comprehending spiritual realities.

4. Blessings of Seeking Heavenly Teachings:

- Celebrates the pursuit of heavenly teachings in the current era.
- Conveys happiness for souls seeking divine guidance.
- Commends the attraction of the heart to the love of God.

5. Expression of Blessings and Happiness:

- Acknowledges the blessedness of a heart stirred and attracted by the love of God.
- Expresses happiness for the individual's engagement with heavenly teachings.
- Encourages gratitude for the spiritual insights and emotions experienced.

Questions and Answers:

1. What does the letter emphasize regarding the recipient's visual condition?

- Answer: The letter acknowledges the material deprivation of physical sight in the recipient.

2. How does 'Abdu'l-Bahá characterize the sight of the heart?

- Answer: The sight of the heart is characterized as illumined, everlasting, and capable of discerning the divine Kingdom.

3. What metaphor is used to describe the meetings organized by the individual?

- Answer: The meetings are likened to the firmament, and the participants are compared to resplendent stars shining with the light of guidance.

4. What blessings are celebrated regarding the seeker of heavenly teachings?

- Answer: The pursuit of heavenly teachings in the current era is celebrated, expressing happiness for souls seeking divine guidance and commendation for the attraction of the heart to the love of God.

5. How does the letter express gratitude and encouragement to the recipient?

- Answer: The letter expresses gratitude for the enlightened sight of the heart and the responsive hearing of the mind. It encourages gratitude for spiritual insights and emotions and commends the individual's engagement with heavenly teachings.

– 19 –

Praise be to Him through Whose splendors the earth and the heavens are aglow, through Whose fragrant breathings the gardens of holiness that adorn the hearts of the chosen are trembling for joy, to Him Who hath shed His light and brightened the face of the firmament. Verily there appeared luminous and sparkling stars, glittering, shining out, and casting forth their rays upon the supreme horizon. They derived their grace and brilliance from the bounties of the Abhá Realm, then, stars of guidance, they poured down their lights upon this earth.

Praise be to Him Who hath fashioned this new era, this age of majesty, even as an unfolding pageant where the realities of all things can be exposed to view. Now are clouds of bounty raining down and the gifts of the loving Lord are clearly manifest; for both the seen and the unseen worlds have been illumined, and the Promised One hath come to earth and the beauty of the Adored One hath shone forth.

Salutations, blessings, and welcome to that Universal Reality, that Perfect Word, that Manifest Book, that Splendor which hath dawned in the highest heaven, that Guide of all nations, that Light of the world—the billowing ocean of Whose abounding grace hath flooded all creation, in such wise that the waves thereof have cast upon the sands of this visible world their shining pearls. Now hath the Truth appeared, and falsehood fled away; now hath the day dawned and jubilation taken over, wherefore men's souls are sanctified, their spirits purged, their hearts rejoiced, their minds purified, their secret thoughts made wholesome, their consciences washed clean, their inmost selves made holy: for the Day of Resurrection hath come to pass, and the bestowals of thy Lord, the Forgiving, have encompassed all things. Salutations and praise be unto those luminous, resplendent stars that are shedding down their rays from the highest heaven, those celestial bodies of the girdling zodiac of the Abhá Realm. May glory rest upon them.

And now, O thou honored man who hath hearkened unto the Great Announcement, rise up to serve the Cause of God with the resistless power of the Abhá Kingdom and the breaths that blow from the spirit of the Company on high. Grieve thou not over what the Pharisees, and the purveyors of false rumors among writers for the press, are saying of Bahá. Call thou to mind the days of Christ, and the afflictions heaped upon Him by the people, and all the torments and tribulations inflicted upon His disciples. Since ye are lovers of the Abhá Beauty, ye also must, for His love's sake, incur the peoples' blame, and all that befell those of a former age must likewise befall you. Then will the faces of the chosen be alight with the splendors of the Kingdom of God, and will shine down the ages, yea, down all the cycles of time, while the deniers shall remain in their manifest loss. It will be even as was said by the Lord Christ: they shall persecute you for My name's sake.

Remind them of these words and say unto them: "Verily did the Pharisees rise up against Messiah, despite the bright beauty of His face and all His comeliness, and they cried out that He was not Messiah [Masíh] but a monster [Masíkh], because He had claimed to be Almighty God, the sovereign Lord of all, and told them, 'I am God's Son, and verily in the inmost being of His only Son, His mighty Ward, clearly revealed with all His attributes, all His perfections, standeth the Father.' This, they said, was open blasphemy and slander against the Lord according to the

clear and irrefutable texts of the Old Testament. Therefore they passed the sentence upon Him, decreeing that His blood be shed, and they hanged Him on the cross, where He cried out, ‘O My beloved Lord, how long wilt Thou abandon Me to them? Lift Me up unto Thee, shelter Me close to Thee, make Me a dwelling by Thy throne of glory. Verily art Thou the Answerer of prayers, and Thou art the Clement, the Merciful. O My Lord! Verily this world with all its vastness can no longer contain Me, and I love this cross, out of love for Thy beauty, and yearning for Thy realm on high, and because of this fire, fanned by the gusts of Thy holiness, aflame within My heart. Help me, O Lord, to ascend unto Thee, sustain Me that I may reach unto Thy sacred Threshold, O My loving Lord! Verily Thou art the Merciful, the Possessor of great bounty! Verily Thou art the Generous! Verily Thou art the Compassionate! Verily Thou art the All-Knowing! There is none other God save Thee, the Mighty, the Powerful!’”

Never would the Pharisees have been emboldened to calumniate Him and charge Him with that grievous sin, but for their ignorance of the inner core of mysteries and the fact that they paid no heed to His splendors and regarded not His proofs. Else would they have acknowledged His words, and borne witness to the verses He revealed, confessed the truth of His utterances, sought shelter under the protective shadow of His banner, learned of His signs and tokens, and rejoiced in His blissful tidings.

Know thou that the Divine Essence, which is called the Invisible of the Invisibles, never to be described, beyond the reach of mind—is sanctified above any mention, any definition or hint or allusion, any acclamation or praise. In the sense that It is that It is, the intellect can never grasp It, and the soul seeking knowledge of It is but a wanderer in the desert, and far astray. “No vision taketh in Him, but He taketh in all vision: He is the Subtile, the All-Informed.”¹

When, however, thou dost contemplate the innermost essence of all things, and the individuality of each, thou wilt behold the signs of thy Lord’s mercy in every created thing, and see the spreading rays of His Names and Attributes throughout all the realm of being, with evidences which none will deny save the froward and the unaware. Then wilt thou observe that the universe is a scroll that discloseth His hidden secrets, which are preserved in the well-guarded Tablet. And not an atom of all the atoms in existence, not a creature from amongst the creatures but speaketh His praise and telleth of His attributes and names, revealeth the glory of His might and guideth to His oneness and His mercy: and none will gainsay this who hath ears to hear, eyes to see, and a mind that is sound.

And whensoever thou dost gaze upon creation all entire, and dost observe the very atoms thereof, thou wilt note that the rays of the Sun of Truth are shed upon all things and shining within them, and telling of that Daystar’s splendors, Its mysteries, and the spreading of Its lights. Look thou upon the trees, upon the blossoms and fruits, even upon the stones. Here too wilt thou behold the Sun’s rays shed upon them, clearly visible within them, and manifested by them.

Shouldst thou, however, turn thy gaze unto a Mirror, brilliant, stainless, and pure, wherein the divine Beauty is reflected, therein wilt thou find the Sun shining with Its rays, Its heat, Its disc, Its fair form all entire. For each separate entity possesseth its allotted portion of the solar light and telleth of the Sun, but that Universal Reality in all Its splendor, that stainless Mirror Whose qualities are appropriate to the qualities of the Sun revealed within It—expresseth in their entirety the attributes of the Source of Glory. And that Universal Reality is Man, the divine Being, the Essence that abideth forever. “Say, Call upon God, or call upon the All-Merciful; whichsoever ye call upon, most beauteous are His Names.”²

This is the meaning of the Messiah’s words, that the Father is in the Son.³ Dost thou not see that should a stainless mirror proclaim, “Verily is the sun ashine within me, together with all its

qualities, tokens and signs,” such an utterance by such a mirror would be neither deceptive nor false? No, by the One Who created It, shaped It, fashioned It, and made It to be an entity conformable to the attributes of the glory within It! Praised be He Who created It! Praised be He Who fashioned It! Praised be He Who made It manifest!

Such were the words uttered by Christ. On account of these words they cavilled at and assailed Him when He said unto them, “Verily the Son is in the Father, and the Father is in the Son.”⁴ Be thou informed of this, and learn thou the secrets of thy Lord. As for the deniers, they are veiled from God: they see not, they hear not, neither do they understand. “Leave them to entertain themselves with their cavillings.”⁵ Abandon them to their wanderings along river beds where no stream flows. Like grazing beasts they cannot tell paste from pearl. Are they not shut away from the mysteries of thy Lord, the Clement, the Merciful?

For thy part, rejoice at this best of all glad tidings, and rise up to exalt the Word of God and to spread abroad His sweet savors in all that vast and mighty land. Know thou of a certainty that thy Lord will come to thine aid with a company of the Concourse on high and hosts of the Abhá Kingdom. These will mount the attack, and will furiously assail the forces of the ignorant, the blind. Erelong wilt thou behold the flush of daybreak spreading from out the Most Exalted Realm, and the morn encompassing all regions. It will put the dark to flight, and the gloom of night will fade and pass, and the bright brow of the Faith shine forth, and the Daystar rise and overspread the world. On that day will the faithful rejoice, and the steadfast be blissful; then will the slanderers take themselves off, and the waverers be blotted out, even as deepest shadows fall away at the first light of the breaking dawn.

Greetings be unto thee, and praise.

O God, my God! This is Thy radiant servant, Thy spiritual thrall, who hath drawn nigh unto Thee and approached Thy presence. He hath turned his face unto Thine, acknowledging Thy oneness, confessing Thy singleness, and he hath called out in Thy name among the nations, and led the people to the streaming waters of Thy mercy, O Thou Most generous Lord! To those who asked he hath given to drink from the cup of guidance that brimmeth over with the wine of Thy measureless grace.

O Lord, assist him under all conditions, cause him to learn Thy well-guarded mysteries, and shower down upon him Thy hidden pearls. Make of him a banner rippling from castle summits in the winds of Thy heavenly aid, make of him a wellspring of crystal waters.

O my forgiving Lord! Light up the hearts with the rays of a lamp that sheddeth abroad its beams, disclosing to those among Thy people whom Thou hast bounteously favored, the realities of all things.

Verily, Thou art the Mighty, the Powerful, the Protector, the Strong, the Beneficent! Verily, Thou art the Lord of all mercies!

Summary:

The letter begins with praise for the splendors of God, recognizing the luminous stars of guidance that have poured down their lights upon the earth. The Manifestation of God in the current era is acknowledged, and the letter urges the recipient to serve the Cause of God despite facing opposition and false rumors. It draws parallels with the persecution faced by Christ, emphasizing the inevitability of facing challenges for the sake of divine truth. The text further discusses the invisible nature of the Divine Essence and the manifestations of God's mercy in all things, comparing the universe to a scroll revealing hidden secrets. The metaphor of a Mirror reflecting the Sun's attributes is used to illustrate the nature of the Manifestation. The letter concludes with

prayers for the honored recipient, expressing hope for assistance, spiritual insight, and the spreading of divine guidance.

Key Points:

1. Praise for God's Splendors and Luminous Stars:

- Acknowledges the brilliance of God's splendors and the stars of guidance.
- Describes the pouring down of lights from the Abhá Realm upon the earth.

2. Manifestation of God in the Current Era:

- Recognizes the appearance of a new era and the advent of the Promised One.
- Expresses jubilation for the manifestation of divine beauty and the spreading of God's gifts.

3. Facing Opposition and False Rumors:

- Encourages the recipient to rise up in service despite opposition.
- Draws parallels with the persecution faced by Christ and His disciples.

4. Invisible Nature of the Divine Essence:

- Highlights the sanctity and beyond-description nature of the Divine Essence.
- Emphasizes that the intellect cannot fully grasp God's essence.

5. Metaphor of the Mirror Reflecting the Sun:

- Describes the universe as a scroll revealing hidden secrets.
- Uses the metaphor of a Mirror reflecting the Sun to illustrate the Manifestation's nature.

6. Prayers and Hope for Assistance:

- Prays for the recipient's assistance with the resistless power of the Abhá Kingdom.
- Seeks spiritual insight, encouragement, and the spreading of divine guidance.
- Expresses hope for the recipient to become a banner of heavenly aid and a wellspring of crystal waters.

Questions and Answers:

1. What is the letter's emphasis regarding facing opposition?

- Answer: The letter emphasizes the inevitability of facing opposition for the sake of divine truth, drawing parallels with the persecution faced by Christ.

2. How is the invisible nature of the Divine Essence described?

- Answer: The Divine Essence is described as sanctified, beyond description, and beyond the reach of the intellect.

3. What metaphor is used to illustrate the nature of the Manifestation of God?

- Answer: The metaphor of a Mirror reflecting the Sun's attributes is used to illustrate the nature of the Manifestation.

4. What is the significance of the comparison of the universe to a scroll?

- Answer: The comparison signifies that the universe reveals hidden secrets, and it is like a scroll disclosing the signs of God.

5. What does the letter express hope for in the concluding part?

- Answer: The letter expresses hope for assistance, spiritual insight, and the spreading of divine guidance for the recipient, asking for divine blessings and support in their endeavors.

– 20 –

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When Christ appeared, twenty centuries ago, although the Jews were eagerly awaiting His Coming, and prayed every day, with tears, saying: “O God, hasten the Revelation of the Messiah,” yet when the Sun of Truth dawned, they denied Him and rose against Him with the greatest enmity, and eventually crucified that divine Spirit, the Word of God, and named Him Beelzebub, the evil one, as is recorded in the Gospel. The reason for this was that they said: “The Revelation of Christ, according to the clear text of the Torah, will be attested by certain signs, and so long as these signs have not appeared, whoso layeth claim to be a Messiah is an impostor. Among these signs is this, that the Messiah should come from an unknown place, yet we all know this man’s house in Nazareth, and can any good thing come out of Nazareth? The second sign is that He shall rule with a rod of iron, that is, He must act with the sword, but this Messiah has not even a wooden staff. Another of the conditions and signs is this: He must sit upon the throne of David and establish David’s sovereignty. Now, far from being enthroned, this man has not even a mat to sit on. Another of the conditions is this: the promulgation of all the laws of the Torah; yet this man has abrogated these laws, and has even broken the sabbath day, although it is the clear text of the Torah that whosoever layeth claim to prophethood and revealeth miracles and breaketh the sabbath day, must be put to death. Another of the signs is this, that in His reign justice will be so advanced that righteousness and well-doing will extend from the human even to the animal world—the snake and the mouse will share one hole, and the eagle and the partridge one nest, the lion and the gazelle shall dwell in one pasture, and the wolf and the kid shall drink from one fountain. Yet now, injustice and tyranny have waxed so great in His time that they have crucified Him! Another of the conditions is this, that in the days of the Messiah the Jews will prosper and triumph over all the peoples of the world, but now they are living in the utmost abasement and servitude in the empire of the Romans. Then how can this be the Messiah promised in the Torah?”

In this wise did they object to that Sun of Truth, although that Spirit of God was indeed the One promised in the Torah. But as they did not understand the meaning of these signs, they crucified the Word of God. Now the Bahá’ís hold that the recorded signs did come to pass in the Manifestation of Christ, although not in the sense which the Jews understood, the description in the Torah being allegorical. For instance, among the signs is that of sovereignty. For Bahá’ís say that the sovereignty of Christ was a heavenly, divine, everlasting sovereignty, not a Napoleonic sovereignty that vanisheth in a short time. For well nigh two thousand years this sovereignty of Christ hath been established, and until now it endureth, and to all eternity that Holy Being will be exalted upon an everlasting throne.

In like manner all the other signs have been made manifest, but the Jews did not understand. Although nearly twenty centuries have elapsed since Christ appeared with divine splendor, yet the Jews are still awaiting the coming of the Messiah and regard themselves as true and Christ as false.

Summary:

The passage reflects on the Jews' reaction to the appearance of Christ, emphasizing their denial and opposition despite their anticipation of the Messiah. It highlights their objections based on

specific signs mentioned in the Torah, such as the Messiah's origin, rule with a rod of iron, sitting on David's throne, and the establishment of justice. The Bahá'ís interpret these signs allegorically, asserting that they were fulfilled in the manifestation of Christ, contrary to the literal expectations of the Jews. The Bahá'ís believe in the enduring sovereignty of Christ and the fulfillment of the

prophesied signs, while the Jews continue to await the Messiah, unaware of the allegorical interpretations.

Key Points:

1. Jews' Anticipation of the Messiah:

- Jews fervently prayed for the Revelation of the Messiah, as recorded in the Torah.
- Upon Christ's appearance, they denied Him and rose against Him, crucifying Him.

2. Jews' Objections Based on Torah Signs:

- The Jews objected based on specific signs mentioned in the Torah regarding the Messiah's characteristics.
- Signs included the Messiah's unknown origin, rule with a rod of iron, sitting on David's throne, and the establishment of justice.

3. Bahá'í Interpretation of Signs:

- The Bahá'ís interpret the signs allegorically, emphasizing the heavenly, enduring nature of Christ's sovereignty.
- Bahá'ís assert that these signs were fulfilled in the manifestation of Christ, contrary to literal expectations.

4. Fulfillment of Allegorical Signs:

- The sovereignty of Christ, described as divine and everlasting, has endured for nearly two thousand years.
- Other signs, such as the establishment of justice, have been fulfilled according to Bahá'í interpretation.

5. Jews' Continued Anticipation and Unawareness:

- Despite the fulfillment of signs, Jews still await the Messiah and regard Christ as false.
- The passage suggests a lack of understanding among the Jews regarding the allegorical interpretation of the Torah signs.

Questions and Answers:

1. What specific signs did the Jews expect from the Messiah according to the Torah?

- Answer: The signs included the Messiah's unknown origin, rule with a rod of iron, sitting on David's throne, and the establishment of justice.

2. How did the Bahá'ís interpret the signs related to the Messiah?

- Answer: The Bahá'ís interpreted the signs allegorically, emphasizing the heavenly, enduring nature of Christ's sovereignty and the fulfillment of these signs in a non-literal sense.

3. What is the contrast between the Bahá'í interpretation and the Jews' expectations regarding the sovereignty of Christ?

- Answer: The Bahá'ís view Christ's sovereignty as heavenly, divine, and everlasting, while the Jews may have expected a temporal, Napoleonic sovereignty.

4. How long has the sovereignty of Christ endured according to the Bahá'í interpretation?

- Answer: The sovereignty of Christ has endured for nearly two thousand years, and it is believed to be everlasting.

5. What does the passage suggest about the Jews' awareness of the allegorical interpretation of the Torah signs?

- Answer: The passage suggests that the Jews lacked understanding regarding the allegorical interpretation of the Torah signs, as they continued to await the Messiah, unaware of the Bahá'í perspective on the fulfillment of these signs in Christ.

– 21 –

O thou distinguished personage, thou seeker after truth! Thy letter of 4 April 1921 hath been read with love.

The existence of the Divine Being hath been clearly established, on the basis of logical proofs, but the reality of the Godhead is beyond the grasp of the mind. When thou dost carefully consider this matter, thou wilt see that a lower plane can never comprehend a higher. The mineral kingdom, for example, which is lower, is precluded from comprehending the vegetable kingdom; for the mineral, any such understanding would be utterly impossible. In the same way, no matter how far the vegetable kingdom may develop, it will achieve no conception of the animal kingdom, and any such comprehension at its level would be unthinkable, for the animal occupieth a plane higher than that of the vegetable: this tree cannot conceive of hearing and sight. And the animal kingdom, no matter how far it may evolve, can never become aware of the reality of the intellect, which discovereth the inner essence of all things, and comprehendeth those realities which cannot be seen; for the human plane as compared with that of the animal is very high. And although these beings all coexist in the contingent world, in each case the difference in their stations precludeth their grasp of the whole; for no lower degree can understand a higher, such comprehension being impossible.

The higher plane, however, understandeth the lower. The animal, for instance, comprehendeth the mineral and vegetable, the human understandeth the planes of the animal, vegetable and mineral. But the mineral cannot possibly understand the realms of man. And notwithstanding the fact that all these entities coexist in the phenomenal world, even so, no lower degree can ever comprehend a higher.

Then how could it be possible for a contingent reality, that is, man, to understand the nature of that preexistent Essence, the Divine Being? The difference in station between man and the Divine Reality is thousands upon thousands of times greater than the difference between vegetable and animal. And that which a human being would conjure up in his mind is but the fanciful image of his human condition, it doth not encompass God's reality but rather is encompassed by it. That is, man graspeth his own illusory conceptions, but the Reality of Divinity can never be grasped: It, Itself, encompasseth all created things, and all created things are in Its grasp. That Divinity which man doth imagine for himself existeth only in his mind, not in truth. Man, however, existeth both in his mind and in truth; thus man is greater than that fanciful reality which he is able to imagine.

The furthestmost limits of this bird of clay are these: he can flutter along for some short distance, into the endless vast; but he can never soar upward to the Sun in the high heavens. We must, nevertheless, set forth reasoned or inspired proofs as to the existence of the Divine Being, that is, proofs commensurate with the understanding of man.

It is obvious that all created things are connected one to another by a linkage complete and perfect, even, for example, as are the members of the human body. Note how all the members and

component parts of the human body are connected one to another. In the same way, all the members of this endless universe are linked one to another. The foot and the step, for example, are connected to the ear and the eye; the eye must look ahead before the step is taken. The ear must hear before the eye will carefully observe. And whatever member of the human body is deficient, produceth a deficiency in the other members. The brain is connected with the heart and stomach, the lungs are connected with all the members. So is it with the other members of the body.

And each one of these members hath its own special function. The mind force—whether we call it preexistent or contingent—doth direct and coordinate all the members of the human body, seeing to it that each part or member duly performeth its own special function. If, however, there be some interruption in the power of the mind, all the members will fail to carry out their essential functions, deficiencies will appear in the body and the functioning of its members, and the power will prove ineffective.

Likewise, look into this endless universe: a universal power inevitably existeth, which encompasseth all, directing and regulating all the parts of this infinite creation; and were it not for this Director, this Coordinator, the universe would be flawed and deficient. It would be even as a madman; whereas ye can see that this endless creation carrieth out its functions in perfect order, every separate part of it performing its own task with complete reliability, nor is there any flaw to be found in all its workings. Thus it is clear that a Universal Power existeth, directing and regulating this infinite universe. Every rational mind can grasp this fact.

Furthermore, although all created things grow and develop, yet are they subjected to influences from without. For instance, the sun giveth heat, the rain nourisheth, the wind bringeth life, so that man can develop and grow. Thus it is clear that the human body is under influences from the outside, and that without those influences man could not grow. And likewise, those outside influences are subjected to other influences in their turn. For example, the growth and development of a human being is dependent upon the existence of water, and water is dependent upon the existence of rain, and rain is dependent upon the existence of clouds, and clouds are dependent upon the existence of the sun, which causeth land and sea to produce vapor, the condensation of vapor forming the clouds. Thus each one of these entities exerteth its influence and is likewise influenced in its turn. Inescapably then, the process leadeth to One Who influenceth all, and yet is influenced by none, thus severing the chain. The inner reality of that Being, however, is not known, although His effects are clear and evident.

And further, all created beings are limited, and this very limitation of all beings proveth the reality of the Limitless; for the existence of a limited being denoteth the existence of a Limitless One.

To sum it up, there are many such proofs, establishing the existence of that Universal Reality. And since that Reality is preexistent, It is untouched by the conditions that govern phenomena; for whatever entity is subject to circumstances and the play of events is contingent, not preexistent. Know then: that divinity which other communions and peoples have conjured up, falleth within the scope of their imagination, and not beyond it, whereas the reality of the Godhead is beyond all conceiving.

As to the Holy Manifestations of God, They are the focal points where the signs, tokens and perfections of that sacred, preexistent Reality appear in all their splendor. They are an eternal grace, a heavenly glory, and on Them dependeth the everlasting life of humankind. To illustrate: the Sun of Truth dwelleth in a sky to which no soul hath any access, and which no mind can reach, and He is far beyond the comprehension of all creatures. Yet the Holy Manifestations of God are even as a looking glass, burnished and without stain, which gathereth streams of light out of that Sun, and

then scattereth the glory over the rest of creation. In that polished surface, the Sun with all Its majesty standeth clearly revealed. Thus, should the mirrored Sun proclaim, "I am the Sun!" this is but truth; and should It cry, "I am not the Sun!" this is the truth as well. And although the Daystar, with all Its glory, Its beauty, Its perfections, be clearly visible in that mirror without stain, still It hath not come down from Its own lofty station in the realms above, It hath not made Its way into the mirror; rather doth It continue to abide, as It will forever, in the supernal heights of Its own holiness.

And further, all the earth's creatures require the bounty of the sun, for their very existence is dependent upon solar light and heat. Should they be deprived of the sun, they would be wiped out. This is the being with God, as referred to in the Holy Books: man must be with his Lord.

It is clear, then, that the essential reality of God is revealed in His perfections; and the sun, with its perfections, reflected in a mirror, is a visible thing, an entity clearly expressing the bounty of God.

My hope is that thou wilt acquire a perceptive eye, a hearing ear, and that the veils will be removed from thy sight.

Summary:

The passage delves into the concept of the Divine Being, emphasizing that while the existence of God can be logically proven, the essence of the Godhead is beyond human comprehension. It draws parallels between the hierarchy of existence, asserting that a lower plane cannot fully grasp a higher one. The human attempt to understand the Divine is limited by the mind's capacity, creating only a fanciful image. The existence of a Universal Power coordinating the universe's interconnected parts is presented as evidence of the Divine. The argument includes the influence of external factors on creation, the limitations of beings, and the need for a Limitless One. Holy

Manifestations are described as mirrors reflecting the perfections of the Divine Sun. The passage encourages the development of perceptive faculties.

Key Points:

1. Limitations of Human Comprehension:

- Logical proofs establish the existence of the Divine Being.
- The essence of the Godhead is beyond the grasp of the human mind.
- Lower planes cannot comprehend higher ones.

2. Hierarchy of Existence:

- Analogy between the mineral, vegetable, animal, and human kingdoms.
- Each level is limited in understanding the higher levels.

3. Divine Reality and Human Imagination:

- The Divine Reality exists beyond human conception.
- Man's imagination conjures a fanciful image of divinity.

4. Universal Power and Coordination:

- The universe is interconnected, and all parts are linked.
- A Universal Power directs and regulates the universe.
- The flawless functioning of the universe demonstrates this coordination.

5. External Influences and Limitations:

- Human growth and development are influenced by external factors.
- External influences are interrelated, leading to a Universal Influencer.
- The Limitless One is beyond human understanding.

6. Limitations as Proof of the Limitless:

- The limitations of created beings indicate the reality of the Limitless.
- A limited being implies the existence of an Unlimited One.

7. Holy Manifestations as Reflectors:

- Holy Manifestations are focal points reflecting the perfections of the Divine.
- They are like polished mirrors, gathering light from the Divine Sun.
- The Daystar remains in its own lofty station and does not descend into the mirror.

8. Human Dependency on the Divine:

- Creatures depend on the bounty of the sun for their existence.
- The Holy Books refer to man being with his Lord.

9. Call for Perceptive Faculties:

- The passage concludes with a call for the acquisition of perceptive vision and hearing.
- Removal of veils from sight is encouraged.

Questions and Answers:

1. How does the passage explain the limitations of human comprehension regarding the Divine Being?
- Answer: The passage asserts that the essence of the Godhead is beyond human comprehension, and attempts to understand it create only a fanciful image limited by the mind's capacity.
2. What is the significance of the analogy between the hierarchy of existence and the limitations of human understanding?
- Answer:* The analogy illustrates that just as lower planes cannot fully comprehend higher ones in the hierarchy of existence, the human attempt to understand the Divine is similarly limited.
3. What evidence does the passage present for the existence of a Universal Power directing the universe?
- Answer: The interconnectedness of all parts in the universe and the flawless functioning of creation demonstrate the existence of a Universal Power coordinating and regulating the universe.
4. How does the passage use the analogy of mirrors to describe the relationship between Holy Manifestations and the Divine Sun?
- Answer: Holy Manifestations are likened to mirrors that reflect the perfections of the Divine Sun. However, the Daystar (Divine Sun) remains in its own lofty station and does not descend into the mirror.
5. What call to action is expressed in the concluding part of the passage?
- Answer: The passage encourages the acquisition of perceptive vision, hearing, and the removal of veils from sight, urging the development of a deeper understanding.

– 22 –

O thou who art turning thy face towards God! Close thine eyes to all things else, and open them to the realm of the All-Glorious. Ask whatsoever thou wishest of Him alone; seek whatsoever thou seekest from Him alone. With a look He granteth a hundred thousand hopes, with a glance He healeth a hundred thousand incurable ills, with a nod He layeth balm on every wound, with a glimpse He freeth the hearts from the shackles of grief. He doeth as He doeth, and what recourse have we? He carrieth out His Will, He ordaineth what He pleaseth. Then better for thee to bow down thy head in submission, and put thy trust in the All-Merciful Lord.

Summary:

The passage advises complete focus on God, closing one's eyes to worldly matters and opening them to the realm of the All-Glorious. It encourages seeking everything from God alone, assuring that a mere look from Him can fulfill numerous hopes, a glance can heal incurable ills, a nod can

soothe all wounds, and a glimpse can liberate hearts from grief. The text emphasizes submission to God's will, acknowledging His authority to carry out His plans.

Key Points:

1. Singular Focus on God:

- Advises turning one's face towards God.
- Encourages closing eyes to worldly matters and opening them to the realm of the All-Glorious.

2. Exclusive Seeking from God:

- Urges asking and seeking everything from God alone.
- Highlights the efficacy of seeking from Him alone in fulfilling desires.

3. God's Swift and Powerful Response:

- Describes the swift and powerful responses from God:
- A look grants numerous hopes.
- A glance heals incurable ills.
- A nod soothes every wound.
- A glimpse liberates hearts from grief.

4. Submission to God's Will:

- Advises bowing down in submission to the All-Merciful Lord.
- Encourages putting trust in God's will and ordainment.

5. Acknowledgment of God's Authority:

- Recognizes God's supreme authority to carry out His will.
- Emphasizes that He does as He pleases, and human recourse is limited.

Questions and Answers:

1. What is the primary advice given in the passage regarding one's focus?

- Answer: The passage advises turning one's face towards God, closing eyes to worldly matters, and opening them to the realm of the All-Glorious.

2. What does the passage assure regarding seeking from God alone?

- Answer: Seeking everything from God alone is assured to be effective, with the passage highlighting that a mere look, glance, nod, or glimpse from God can fulfill various needs.

3. How does the text emphasize the power of God's responses to human desires?

- Answer: The passage describes God's responses as swift and powerful, illustrating that His look can fulfill numerous hopes, His glance can heal incurable ills, His nod can soothe all wounds, and His glimpse can liberate hearts from grief.

4. What attitude towards God's will and ordainment is encouraged in the passage?

- Answer: The passage encourages bowing down in submission to the All-Merciful Lord and putting trust in God's will and ordainment.

5. What does the passage emphasize about God's authority and human recourse?

- Answer: The passage emphasizes that God does as He pleases, ordains what He wishes, and acknowledges the limited human recourse in the face of God's supreme authority.

– 23 –

O thou who dost search after truth! Thy letter of 13 December 1920 hath come.

From the days of Adam until today, the religions of God have been made manifest, one following the other, and each one of them fulfilled its due function, revived mankind, and provided education and enlightenment. They freed the people from the darkness of the world of nature and ushered them into the brightness of the Kingdom. As each succeeding Faith and Law became revealed it remained for some centuries a richly fruitful tree and to it was committed the happiness of humankind. However, as the centuries rolled by, it aged, it flourished no more and put forth no fruit, wherefore was it then made young again.

The religion of God is one religion, but it must ever be renewed. Moses, for example, was sent forth to man and He established a Law, and the Children of Israel, through that Mosaic Law, were delivered out of their ignorance and came into the light; they were lifted up from their abjectness and attained to a glory that fadeth not. Still, as the long years wore on, that radiance passed by, that splendor set, that bright day turned to night; and once that night grew triply dark, the star of the Messiah dawned, so that again a glory lit the world.

Our meaning is this: the religion of God is one, and it is the educator of humankind, but still, it needs must be made new. When thou dost plant a tree, its height increaseth day by day. It putteth forth blossoms and leaves and luscious fruits. But after a long time, it doth grow old, yielding no fruitage any more. Then doth the Husbandman of Truth take up the seed from that same tree, and plant it in a pure soil; and lo, there standeth the first tree, even as it was before.

Note thou carefully that in this world of being, all things must ever be made new. Look at the material world about thee, see how it hath now been renewed. The thoughts have changed, the ways of life have been revised, the sciences and arts show a new vigor, discoveries and inventions are new, perceptions are new. How then could such a vital power as religion—the guarantor of mankind's great advances, the very means of attaining everlasting life, the fosterer of infinite excellence, the light of both worlds—not be made new? This would be incompatible with the grace and loving-kindness of the Lord.

Religion, moreover, is not a series of beliefs, a set of customs; religion is the teachings of the Lord God, teachings which constitute the very life of humankind, which urge high thoughts upon the mind, refine the character, and lay the groundwork for man's everlasting honor.

Note thou: could these fevers in the world of the mind, these fires of war and hate, of resentment and malice among the nations, this aggression of peoples against peoples, which have destroyed the tranquillity of the whole world ever be made to abate, except through the living waters of the teachings of God? No, never!

And this is clear: a power above and beyond the powers of nature must needs be brought to bear, to change this black darkness into light, and these hatreds and resentments, grudges and spite, these endless wrangles and wars, into fellowship and love amongst all the peoples of the earth. This power is none other than the breathings of the Holy Spirit and the mighty inflow of the Word of God.

Summary:

The passage underscores the cyclical nature of divine religions, highlighting that religions of God are renewed throughout history. Each religion serves to educate, enlighten, and bring humanity

out of darkness into the brightness of the Kingdom. The metaphor of a tree is employed to depict the aging of religions, followed by their renewal, emphasizing the oneness of the divine message. The text contends that the religion of God is one, but it must continually be made new. The analogy of planting a tree is used to illustrate the renewal process, emphasizing the necessity of constant spiritual rejuvenation. The passage asserts that religion is not merely a set of beliefs or customs but the teachings of the Lord God that constitute the essence of human life. It further emphasizes

that the renewal of religion is essential for addressing the challenges facing humanity, bringing about transformation, and fostering unity and love among all peoples.

Key Points:

1. Cyclical Nature of Divine Religions:

- Religions of God have been successively revealed throughout history.
- Each religion fulfills its function, educating and enlightening humankind.

2. Renewal of Religions:

- Religion is one but must be continually renewed.
- The analogy of a tree is used to illustrate the cyclical process of aging and renewal.

3. Analogy of Planting a Tree:

- Planting a tree, seeing it flourish, age, and lose fruitfulness.
- The Husbandman of Truth takes the seed and plants it anew, resulting in the renewal of the first tree.

4. Necessity of Renewal:

- Everything in the material world is subject to renewal, and so is religion.
- Vital power of religion ensures mankind's advances and everlasting life.

5. Religion as Life-Giving Teachings:

- Religion is not a set of beliefs or customs but teachings that constitute human life.
- These teachings encourage high thoughts, refine character, and lay the foundation for everlasting honor.

6. Role of Religion in Addressing Global Challenges:

- The world's mental fevers, wars, hatred, and resentment can only be alleviated by the teachings of God.
- The transformative power required to turn darkness into light and foster fellowship among nations is the breathings of the Holy Spirit and the inflow of the Word of God.

Questions and Answers:

1. What analogy is used to depict the cyclical nature of religions, and what does it symbolize?

- Answer: The analogy of planting a tree is used to depict the cyclical nature of religions, symbolizing the process of growth, aging, and renewal.

2. What is emphasized regarding the oneness of the divine message?

- Answer: The passage emphasizes that the religion of God is one, illustrating its oneness through the metaphor of the renewal of a tree.

3. How is the renewal of religion compared to planting a tree?

- Answer: * The renewal of religion is likened to planting a tree, observing its growth, aging, and loss of fruitfulness. The Husbandman of Truth then takes the seed, planting it anew to renew the first tree.

4. What is the essential role of religion, according to the passage?

- Answer: Religion is not merely a set of beliefs or customs but the teachings of the Lord God. These teachings constitute the essence of human life, encouraging high thoughts, refining character, and laying the foundation for everlasting honor.

5. What transformative power does the passage assert is needed to address global challenges and foster unity?

- Answer: The breathings of the Holy Spirit and the mighty inflow of the Word of God are presented as the transformative power needed to turn darkness into light, fostering fellowship and love among all peoples.

– 24 –

O spiritual youth! Praise thou God that thou hast found thy way into the Kingdom of Splendors, and hast rent asunder the veil of vain imaginings, and that the core of the inner mystery hath been made known unto thee.

This people, all of them, have pictured a god in the realm of the mind, and worship that image which they have made for themselves. And yet that image is comprehended, the human mind being the comprehender thereof, and certainly the comprehender is greater than that which lieth within its grasp; for imagination is but the branch, while mind is the root; and certainly the root is greater than the branch. Consider then, how all the peoples of the world are bowing the knee to a fancy of their own contriving, how they have created a creator within their own minds, and they call it the Fashioner of all that is—whereas in truth it is but an illusion. Thus are the people worshipping only an error of perception.

But that Essence of Essences, that Invisible of Invisibles, is sanctified above all human speculation, and never to be overtaken by the mind of man. Never shall that immemorial Reality lodge within the compass of a contingent being. His is another realm, and of that realm no understanding can be won. No access can be gained thereto; all entry is forbidden there. The utmost one can say is that Its existence can be proved, but the conditions of Its existence are unknown.

That such an Essence doth exist, the philosophers and learned doctors one and all have understood; but whenever they tried to learn something of Its being, they were left bewildered and dismayed, and at the end, despairing, their hopes in ruins, they went their way, out of this life. For to comprehend the state and the inner mystery of that Essence of Essences, that Most Secret of Secrets, one needs must have another power and other faculties; and such a power, such faculties would be more than humankind can bear, wherefore no word of Him can come to them.

If, for example, one be endowed with the senses of hearing, of taste, of smell, of touch—but be deprived of the sense of sight, it will not be possible for one to gaze about; for sight cannot be realized through hearing or tasting, or the sense of smell or touch. In the same way, with the faculties at man's disposal it is beyond the realm of possibility for him to grasp that unseeable Reality, holy and sanctified above all the skeptics' doubts. For this, other faculties are required, other senses; should such powers become available to him, then could a human being receive some knowledge of that world; otherwise, never.

Summary:

The passage praises the reader for finding the Kingdom of Splendors, acknowledging the unveiling of inner mysteries. It contrasts the worship of self-made gods within the mind, comprehended by human thought, with the sanctified and inaccessible Essence of Essences. The limitation of human

understanding is emphasized, as philosophers, despite acknowledging the existence of this Essence, fail to comprehend its inner mystery. The analogy of sensory deprivation illustrates the

inability to grasp this unseeable Reality with the faculties at humanity's disposal. It concludes that other faculties are required for knowledge of this realm.

Key Points:

1. Praise for Spiritual Youth:

- Acknowledgment of the reader's entrance into the Kingdom of Splendors.
- Recognition of unveiling inner mysteries and breaking through vain imaginings.

2. Worship of Self-Made Gods:

- Critique of people creating a god within their minds.
- The comprehender (mind) is greater than the image it grasps.
- Illustration of worshipping an error of perception rather than a reality.

3. Incomprehensibility of the Essence of Essences:

- Declaration that the Essence of Essences is beyond human speculation.
- Emphasis on its sanctification and inaccessibility to the mind of man.

4. Philosophers' Dismay:

- Philosophers acknowledge the existence of the Essence.
- Attempts to learn about its being lead to bewilderment and despair.

5. Limitation of Human Faculties:

- Illustration using sensory deprivation.
- The analogy emphasizes that with available faculties, humans cannot grasp the unseeable Reality.
- Other faculties are necessary for knowledge of that realm.

Questions and Answers:

1. What is the contrast highlighted in the passage regarding worship?

- Answer: The passage contrasts the worship of self-made gods within the mind, comprehended by human thought, with the sanctified and inaccessible Essence of Essences.

2. What analogy is used to illustrate the limitation of human faculties in comprehending the unseeable Reality?

- Answer: The analogy of sensory deprivation is used, highlighting that just as one deprived of sight cannot gaze about through other senses, humans, with their existing faculties, cannot grasp the unseeable Reality.

3. What is the fate of philosophers attempting to understand the Essence of Essences?

- Answer: Philosophers, despite acknowledging the existence of the Essence, are left bewildered and dismayed in their attempts to comprehend its being.

4. Why is the Essence of Essences described as sanctified and beyond human speculation?

- Answer: The Essence of Essences is described as sanctified and beyond human speculation to emphasize its sacred and inaccessible nature, never to be overtaken by the human mind.

5. What does the passage assert about the conditions of existence of the Essence of Essences?

- Answer: While the existence of the Essence is acknowledged, the conditions of its existence are unknown, and it is emphasized that no understanding or access can be gained to its realm with the current faculties of humankind.

– 25 –

O thou handmaid of God! It is recorded in eastern histories that Socrates journeyed to Palestine and Syria and there, from men learned in the things of God, acquired certain spiritual truths; that when he returned to Greece, he promulgated two beliefs: one, the unity of God, and the other, the immortality of the soul after its separation from the body; that these concepts, so foreign to their thought, raised a great commotion among the Greeks, until in the end they gave him poison and killed him.

And this is authentic; for the Greeks believed in many gods, and Socrates established the fact that God is one, which obviously was in conflict with Greek beliefs.

The Founder of monotheism was Abraham; it is to Him that this concept can be traced, and the belief was current among the Children of Israel, even in the days of Socrates.

The above, however, cannot be found in the Jewish histories; there are many facts which are not included in Jewish history. Not all the events of the life of Christ are set forth in the history of Josephus, a Jew, although it was he who wrote the history of the times of Christ. One may not, therefore, refuse to believe in events of Christ's day on the grounds that they are not to be found in the history of Josephus.

Eastern histories also state that Hippocrates sojourned for a long time in the town of Tyre, and this is a city in Syria.

Summary:

The passage recounts a historical account suggesting that Socrates journeyed to Palestine and Syria, learning spiritual truths about the unity of God and the immortality of the soul. When he returned to Greece and propagated these ideas conflicting with Greek beliefs, it led to his demise. The text draws a connection between monotheism, traced back to Abraham, and Socrates challenging polytheistic Greek beliefs. The lack of certain events in Jewish histories is acknowledged, and a parallel is drawn with the omission of some events in Josephus's history of

Christ's times. Additionally, it mentions that Hippocrates spent a considerable time in the town of Tyre in Syria.

Key Points:

1. Socrates' Journey:

- Socrates travels to Palestine and Syria.
- Learns spiritual truths about the unity of God and the immortality of the soul.
- Propagates these beliefs in Greece.

2. Conflict with Greek Beliefs:

- Socrates' teachings clash with polytheistic Greek beliefs.
- Greeks, disturbed by these ideas, give him poison, leading to his death.

3. Abraham as the Founder of Monotheism:

- Monotheism is attributed to Abraham.
- Abraham's role in establishing the concept of one God.

4. Gaps in Jewish Histories:

- Acknowledgment of certain events not included in Jewish history.
- Comparison with Josephus, a Jew, not covering all aspects of Christ's life.

5. Parallel Histories:

- Comparison with the omission of events in Josephus's history to justify belief in Christ's day events.
- Mention of Hippocrates spending an extended time in Tyre, Syria.

Questions and Answers:

1. What two spiritual truths did Socrates reportedly acquire during his journey to Palestine and Syria? - Answer: Socrates acquired the spiritual truths of the unity of God and the immortality of the soul.

2. What conflict arose in Greece due to Socrates' teachings, and how did it end for him?

- Answer: Socrates' teachings clashed with Greek beliefs, causing disturbance. In the end, he was given poison by the Greeks, leading to his death.

3. Who is attributed as the Founder of Monotheism, and what role is ascribed to this figure?

- Answer: Abraham is attributed as the Founder of Monotheism, with a role in establishing the concept of one God.

4. What does the passage acknowledge regarding Jewish histories and certain events?

- Answer: The passage acknowledges that not all events of Christ's day are included in Jewish histories.

5. What parallel is drawn between the omission of events in Jewish history and another historical account?

- Answer: A parallel is drawn between the omission of events in Jewish history and Josephus's history of Christ's times, emphasizing that the absence of certain events does not negate their occurrence.

– 26 –

O thou who seekest the Kingdom of Heaven! Thy letter hath been received and its contents noted.

The Holy Manifestations of God possess two stations: one is the physical station, and one the spiritual. In other words, one station is that of a human being, and one, of the Divine Reality. If the Manifestations are subjected to tests, it is in Their human station only, not in the splendor of Their Divine Reality.

And further, these tests are such only from the viewpoint of mankind. That is, to outward seeming, the human condition of the Holy Manifestations is subjected to tests, and when Their strength and endurance have by this means been revealed in the plenitude of power, other men receive instruction therefrom, and are made aware of how great must be their own steadfastness and endurance under tests and trials. For the Divine Educator must teach by word and also by deed, thus revealing to all the straight pathway of truth.

As to my station, it is that of the servant of Bahá; ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, the visible expression of servitude to the Threshold of the Abhá Beauty.

Summary:

The passage explains the dual stations of the Holy Manifestations of God—physical and spiritual. It emphasizes that any tests faced by the Manifestations are only in their human station, not affecting the splendor of their Divine Reality. These tests serve as lessons for humanity to observe the Manifestations' endurance, thereby learning the importance of steadfastness in trials. The writer

identifies their own station as that of a servant to Bahá, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, symbolizing servitude to the Abhá Beauty.

Key Points:

1. Dual Stations of Holy Manifestations:

- Manifestations have two stations: physical (human) and spiritual (Divine Reality).
- Tests affect only their human condition, not their Divine splendor.

2. Purpose of Tests:

- Tests on the human station reveal strength and endurance.
- Observers learn from Manifestations' example how to endure trials.

3. Teaching by Word and Deed:

- Divine Educator imparts knowledge through both word and deed.
- Manifestations show the straight pathway of truth through their actions.

4. Lessons from Manifestations' Endurance:

- Manifestations' steadfastness instructs humanity on facing challenges.
- Demonstrates the importance of enduring tests and trials.

5. ‘Abdu’l Bahá 's Station:

- The author identifies as a servant of Bahá.
- Symbolizes servitude to the Threshold of the Abhá Beauty.

Questions and Answers:

1. What are the two stations of the Holy Manifestations of God?

- Answer: The Holy Manifestations have physical (human) and spiritual (Divine Reality) stations.

2. In what context are the Manifestations subjected to tests, and how does it impact humanity?

- Answer: Manifestations are tested in their human condition. The impact is that humanity learns from their endurance and steadfastness in the face of tests.

3. How does the Divine Educator teach, and what does it reveal to humanity?

- Answer: The Divine Educator teaches through both word and deed, revealing the straight pathway of truth through actions.

4. What is the purpose of the lessons derived from the Manifestations' endurance?

- Answer: The lessons aim to teach humanity the importance of steadfastness and endurance under tests and trials.

5. How does the author identify their own station, and what does it symbolize?

- Answer: The author identifies as a servant of Bahá; ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, symbolizing servitude to the Threshold of the Abhá Beauty.

In cycles gone by, each one of the Manifestations of God hath had His own rank in the world of existence, and each hath represented a stage in the development of humanity. But the Manifestation of the Most Great Name—may my life be a sacrifice for His loved ones—was an expression of the coming of age, the maturing of man's inmost reality in this world of being. For the sun is the source and wellspring of light and heat, the focal point of splendors, and it compriseth all the perfections that are made manifest by the other stars which have dawned upon the world. Make thou an effort that thou mayest take thy place under the sun and receive an abundant share of its dazzling light. In truth do I tell thee, once thou hast attained this station, thou shalt behold the saints bowing down their heads in all humility before Him. Haste thou to life before death cometh; haste thou to the spring season before autumn draweth in; and before illness striketh, haste thou to healing—that thou mayest become a physician of the spirit who, with the breaths of the Holy Spirit, healeth all manner of sickness in this famed and glorious age.

Summary:

The passage emphasizes the unique station of the Manifestation of the Most Great Name, symbolized as the sun, representing the culmination of humanity's development. The call is to strive for a place under this spiritual sun to receive its abundant light. The urgency to hasten

towards spiritual awakening and healing is stressed, akin to embracing life before death, enjoying spring before autumn, and seeking healing before illness.

Key Points:

1. Manifestations' Rank and Development:

- Each Manifestation of God has had a distinct rank and represented a stage in humanity's development.
- The Manifestation of the Most Great Name signifies the coming of age, the maturing of human reality.

2. Symbolism of the Sun:

- The Manifestation of the Most Great Name is likened to the sun.
- The sun is the source of light, heat, and the focal point of splendors.
- Comprises all perfections manifested by other stars in the world.

3. Call to Attain a Place under the Sun:

- Encourages making efforts to attain a spiritual station under the Manifestation.
- Promises an abundant share of the dazzling light of this spiritual sun.

4. Humility and Saints' Submission:

- Describes the saints bowing down in humility before the Manifestation.
- Implies the exalted spiritual station one can achieve by aligning with the Most Great Name.

5. Urgency for Spiritual Awakening and Healing:

- Urges to hasten towards spiritual life before death arrives.
- Encourages seizing the spring season of spiritual growth before autumn sets in.
- Stresses the importance of seeking spiritual healing before succumbing to illness.

Questions and Answers:

1. What distinguishes the Manifestation of the Most Great Name from others?

- Answer: The Manifestation of the Most Great Name signifies the maturing of humanity's inmost reality and is likened to the source of light and splendors—the sun.

2. How is the sun symbolically described in relation to the Manifestation?

- Answer: The sun is the source of light, heat, and focal point of splendors, comprising all perfections manifested by other stars.

3. What is the call regarding one's spiritual station in relation to the sun?

- Answer: The call is to strive for a place under the spiritual sun of the Most Great Name to receive an abundant share of its dazzling light.

4. What is the imagery used to convey the spiritual station of those aligning with the Most Great Name?

- Answer: Saints are depicted bowing down in humility before the Manifestation, emphasizing an exalted spiritual station.

5. What is the urgency conveyed in the passage, and how is it metaphorically expressed?

- Answer: Urges to hasten towards spiritual life before death, seize the spiritual spring before autumn, and seek spiritual healing before succumbing to illness.

– 28 –

O leaf upon the Tree of Life! The Tree of Life, of which mention is made in the Bible, is Bahá'u'lláh, and the daughters of the Kingdom are the leaves upon that blessed Tree. Then thank thou God that thou hast become related to that Tree, and that thou art flourishing, tender and fresh.

The gates of the Kingdom are opened wide, and every favored soul is seated at the banquet table of the Lord, receiving his portion of that heavenly feast. Praised be God, thou too art present at this table, taking thy share of the bountiful food of heaven. Thou art serving the Kingdom, and art well acquainted with the sweet savors of the Abhá Paradise.

Then strive thou with all thy might to guide the people, and eat thou of the bread that hath come down from heaven. For this is the meaning of Christ's words: "I am the living bread which came down from heaven ... he that eateth of this bread shall live forever."¹

Summary:

The passage likens Bahá'u'lláh to the Tree of Life mentioned in the Bible, with believers as its leaves. The text expresses gratitude for being connected to this divine Tree and participating in the

heavenly feast. It calls on the reader to serve the Kingdom, guide others, and partake in the spiritual sustenance symbolized by the "living bread" that came down from heaven.

Key Points:

1. Identification of the Tree of Life:

- The Tree of Life mentioned in the Bible is identified as Bahá'u'lláh.
- Believers are described as the leaves upon this blessed Tree.

2. Gratitude for Connection:

- The reader is urged to thank God for being related to the Tree of Life.
- Expresses joy that the individual is flourishing, tender, and fresh in this divine connection.

3. Abundance in the Kingdom:

- Describes the gates of the Kingdom as wide open.
- Every favored soul is seated at the banquet table of the Lord, partaking in the heavenly feast.

4. Service and Spiritual Sustenance:

- Acknowledges the reader's presence at the divine table and partaking in the bountiful food of heaven.
- Encourages striving to guide others and serving the Kingdom.

5. Symbolism of "Living Bread":

- Quotes Christ's words: "I am the living bread which came down from heaven."
- Relates eating this bread to living forever.

Questions and Answers:

1. Who is identified as the Tree of Life in the passage?

- Answer: The Tree of Life is identified as Bahá'u'lláh.

2. How are believers depicted in relation to the Tree of Life?

- Answer: Believers are described as the leaves upon the blessed Tree of Life.

3. What is the reader urged to be thankful for?

- Answer: The reader is urged to thank God for being related to the Tree of Life and for flourishing in that divine connection.

4. What is the significance of the "banquet table of the Lord" in the Kingdom?

- Answer: It symbolizes the abundance in the Kingdom, where every favored soul partakes in the heavenly feast.

5. What does the passage encourage the reader to do in relation to the Kingdom?

- Answer: The reader is encouraged to strive to guide others, serve the Kingdom, and partake in the spiritual sustenance symbolized by the "living bread" from heaven.

O thou who art captivated by the truth and magnetized by the Heavenly Kingdom! Thy long letter hath come and it brought great joy, as it clearly betokened thy strenuous efforts and high purposes. Praised be God, thou wishest well to men, and yearnest after the Kingdom of Bahá, and art longing to see the human race press forward. It is my hope that because of these high ideals, these noble intimations of the heart, and these tidings of heaven, thou shalt become so luminous that down all the ages the light of thy love for God will shed its glory.

Thou hast described thyself as a student in the school of spiritual progress. Fortunate art thou! If these schools of progress lead to the university of heaven, then branches of knowledge will be developed whereby humanity will look upon the tablet of existence as a scroll endlessly unfolding; and all created things will be seen upon that scroll as letters and words. Then will the different planes of meaning be learned, and then within every atom of the universe will be witnessed the signs of the oneness of God. Then will man hear the cry of the Lord of the Kingdom, and behold the confirmations of the Holy Spirit coming to succor him. Then will he feel such bliss, such ecstasy, that the wide world with its vastness will no longer contain him, and he will set out for the Kingdom of God, and hurry along to the realm of the spirit. For once a bird hath grown its wings, it remaineth on the ground no more, but soareth upward into high heaven—except for those birds that are tied by the leg, or those whose wings are broken, or mired down.

O thou seeker after truth! The world of the Kingdom is one world. The only difference is that spring returneth over and over again, and setteth up a great new commotion throughout all created things. Then plain and hillside come alive, and trees turn delicately green, and leaves, blossoms and fruits come forth in beauty, infinite and tender. Wherefore the dispensations of past ages are intimately connected with those that follow them: indeed, they are one and the same, but as the world groweth, so doth the light, so doth the downpour of heavenly grace, and then the Daystar shineth out in noonday splendor.

O thou seeker after the Kingdom! Every divine Manifestation is the very life of the world, and the skilled physician of each ailing soul. The world of man is sick, and that competent Physician knoweth the cure, arising as He doth with teachings, counsels and admonishments that are the remedy for every pain, the healing balm to every wound. It is certain that the wise physician can diagnose his patient's needs at any season, and apply the cure. Wherefore, relate thou the Teachings of the Abhá Beauty to the urgent needs of this present day, and thou wilt see that they provide an instant remedy for the ailing body of the world. Indeed, they are the elixir that bringeth eternal health.

The treatment ordered by wise physicians of the past, and by those that follow after, is not one and the same, rather doth it depend on what aileth the patient; and although the remedy may change, the aim is always to bring the patient back to health. In the dispensations gone before, the feeble body of the world could not withstand a rigorous or powerful cure. For this reason did Christ say: "I have yet many things to say unto you, matters needing to be told, but ye cannot bear to hear them now. Howbeit when that Comforting Spirit, Whom the Father will send, shall come, He will make plain unto you the truth."¹

Therefore, in this age of splendors, teachings once limited to the few are made available to all, that the mercy of the Lord may embrace both east and west, that the oneness of the world of humanity may appear in its full beauty, and that the dazzling rays of reality may flood the realm of the mind with light.

The descent of the New Jerusalem denoteth a heavenly Law, that Law which is the guarantor of human happiness and the effulgence of the world of God.

Emmanuel² was indeed the Herald of the Second Coming of Christ, and a Summoner to the pathway of the Kingdom. It is evident that the Letter is a member of the Word, and this membership in the Word signifieth that the Letter is dependent for its value on the Word, that is, it deriveth its grace from the Word; it has a spiritual kinship with the Word, and is accounted an integral part of the Word. The Apostles were even as Letters, and Christ was the essence of the Word Itself; and the meaning of the Word, which is grace everlasting, cast a splendor on those Letters. Again, since the Letter is a member of the Word, it therefore, in its inner meaning, is consonant with the Word.

It is our hope that thou wilt in this day arise to promote that which Emmanuel foretold. Know thou for a certainty that thou wilt succeed in this, for the confirmations of the Holy Spirit are continually descending, and the power of the Word will exert such an influence that the Letter shall become the mirror in which the splendid Sun—the Word Itself—will be reflected, and the grace and glory of the Word will illumine the whole earth.

As for the heavenly Jerusalem that hath come to rest on the summits of the world, and God's Holy of Holies, Whose banner is now lifted high, this comprehendeth within itself all the perfections, all the knowledge of the dispensations gone before. Beyond this, it heraldeth the oneness of the children of men. It is the flag of universal peace, the spirit of eternal life; it is the glory of the perfections of God, the circumambient grace of all existence, the ornament bedecking all created things, the source of inner quietude for all humankind.

Direct thine attention to the holy Tablets; read thou the *Ishráqát*, *Tajallíyyát*, the Words of Paradise, the Glad Tidings, the *Tarázát*, the Most Holy Book. Then wilt thou see that today these heavenly Teachings are the remedy for a sick and suffering world, and a healing balm for the sores on the body of mankind. They are the spirit of life, the ark of salvation, the magnet to draw down eternal glory, the dynamic power to motivate the inner self of man.

Summary:

The passage begins with gratitude for the recipient's efforts in seeking truth and contributing to the Kingdom of Bahá. It portrays the reader as a student in the school of spiritual progress and emphasizes the interconnectedness of divine dispensations throughout ages. The metaphor of the changing seasons symbolizes the progression and growth of spiritual teachings. The passage underscores the transformative power of the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh in addressing the ailments of the world. It references Christ's promise of a Comforting Spirit, affirming the relevance of the teachings to the present day. The New Jerusalem is described as a heavenly law, bringing human happiness and the effulgence of God's world. Emmanuel is acknowledged as the Herald of the Second Coming of Christ, and the role of letters (Apostles) in relation to the Word is explained.

The heavenly Jerusalem is presented as the embodiment of divine perfections and the herald of human unity.

Key Points:

1. Gratitude and Spiritual Progress:

- Gratitude for the recipient's efforts in seeking truth and contributing to the Kingdom of Bahá.
- The reader is depicted as a student in the school of spiritual progress.

2. Interconnectedness of Divine Dispensations:

- The passage emphasizes the interconnectedness of divine dispensations throughout ages.
- Changing seasons metaphor symbolizes spiritual progression and growth.

3. Transformative Power of Bahá'u'lláh's Teachings:

- The teachings of Bahá'u'lláh are portrayed as a remedy for the ailments of the world.
- Reference to Christ's promise of a Comforting Spirit for the present day.

4. Significance of the New Jerusalem:

- The New Jerusalem is described as a heavenly law bringing human happiness and God's effulgence.
- Emmanuel is acknowledged as the Herald of the Second Coming of Christ.

5. Role of Letters and the Heavenly Jerusalem:

- Explanation of the spiritual kinship between letters (Apostles) and the Word (Christ).
- The heavenly Jerusalem embodies divine perfections and heralds human unity.

Questions and Answers:

1. What is the reader depicted as in the passage?

- Answer: The reader is depicted as a student in the school of spiritual progress.

2. What does the changing seasons metaphor symbolize?

- Answer: It symbolizes the interconnectedness of divine dispensations, portraying spiritual progression and growth.

3. How are the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh portrayed in addressing the world's ailments?

- Answer: The teachings are portrayed as a remedy for the ailments of the world, a healing balm for humanity.

4. Who is acknowledged as the Herald of the Second Coming of Christ?

- Answer: Emmanuel is acknowledged as the Herald of the Second Coming of Christ.

5. What is the heavenly Jerusalem described as in the passage?

- Answer: The heavenly Jerusalem is described as a heavenly law bringing human happiness, the effulgence of God, and heralding human unity.

Existence is of two kinds: one is the existence of God which is beyond the comprehension of man. He, the invisible, the lofty and the incomprehensible, is preceded by no cause but rather is the Originator of the cause of causes. He, the Ancient, hath had no beginning and is the all-independent. The second kind of existence is the human existence. It is a common existence, comprehensible to the human mind, is not ancient, is dependent and hath a cause to it. The mortal substance does not become eternal and vice versa; the human kind does not become a Creator and vice versa. The transformation of the innate substance is impossible.

In the world of existence—that which is comprehensible—there are stages of mortality: the first stage is the mineral world, next is the vegetable world. In the latter world the mineral doth exist but with a distinctive feature which is the vegetable characteristic. Likewise in the animal world, the mineral and vegetable characteristics are present and in addition the characteristics of the animal world are to be found, which are the faculties of hearing and of sight. In the human world the characteristics of the mineral, vegetable and animal worlds are found and in addition that of the human kind, namely the intellectual characteristic, which discovereth the realities of things and comprehendeth universal principles.

Man, therefore, on the plane of the contingent world is the most perfect being. By man is meant the perfect individual, who is like unto a mirror in which the divine perfections are manifested and reflected. But the sun doth not descend from the height of its sanctity to enter into the mirror, but when the latter is purified and turned towards the Sun of Truth, the perfections of this Sun, consisting of light and heat, are reflected and manifested in that mirror. These souls are the Divine Manifestations of God.

Summary:

The passage discusses two kinds of existence: the incomprehensible existence of God and the common, comprehensible human existence. God's existence is beyond human understanding and has no cause, being the Originator of causes. Human existence, on the other hand, is mortal, comprehensible, dependent, and has a cause. The transformation of innate substance is deemed impossible.

In the comprehensible world, existence has stages of mortality: mineral, vegetable, animal, and human. Each stage incorporates the characteristics of the previous stages, with humans being the most perfect beings. The human world contains the characteristics of the mineral, vegetable, and

animal worlds, along with the intellectual characteristic, enabling the discovery of realities and understanding universal principles.

The passage concludes by likening the perfect individual to a mirror reflecting divine perfections. These individuals, when purified and turned towards the "Sun of Truth," manifest the perfections of God. Such souls are described as Divine Manifestations of God.

Key Points:

1. Two Kinds of Existence:

- Existence of God: Incomprehensible, beyond human understanding, no cause, Originator of causes.
- Human Existence: Common, comprehensible, mortal, dependent, has a cause.

2. Stages of Mortality in the Comprehensible World:

- Mineral World
- Vegetable World
- Animal World
- Human World

3. Characteristics in Each Stage:

- Mineral: Basic characteristics
- Vegetable: Mineral characteristics + distinctive vegetable features
- Animal: Mineral and vegetable characteristics + animal faculties (hearing, sight)
- Human: Mineral, vegetable, and animal characteristics + human intellectual characteristic.

4. Perfection of Human Beings:

- Humans are the most perfect beings on the plane of the contingent world.
- The perfect individual is like a mirror reflecting divine perfections.

5. Divine Manifestations:

- Souls purified and turned towards the "Sun of Truth" manifest divine perfections.
- These souls are described as Divine Manifestations of God.

Questions and Answers:

1. What are the two kinds of existence discussed in the passage?

- Answer: Existence of God (incomprehensible) and human existence (common, comprehensible).

2. What are the stages of mortality mentioned in the comprehensible world?

- Answer: Mineral, vegetable, animal, and human.

3. What does the human world encompass in terms of characteristics?

- Answer: It contains the characteristics of the mineral, vegetable, and animal worlds, along with the intellectual characteristic of humans.

4. How is the perfect individual described in relation to divine perfections?

- Answer: The perfect individual is likened to a mirror reflecting divine perfections.

5. What is the outcome when souls are purified and turned towards the "Sun of Truth"?

- Answer: These souls manifest the perfections of God and are described as Divine Manifestations.

– 31 –

O thou who art dear, and wise! Thy letter dated 27 May 1906 hath been received and its contents are most pleasing and have brought great joy.

Thou didst ask whether this Cause, this new and living Cause, could take the place of the dead religious rites and ceremonials of England; whether it would be possible, now that various groups have appeared, whose members are highly placed divines and theologians, far superior in their attainments to those of the past, for this new Cause so to impress the members of such groups as to gather them and the rest into its all-protecting shade.

O thou dear friend! Know thou that the distinguished Individual of every age is endowed according to the perfections of His age. That Individual who in past ages was set above His fellows was gifted according to the virtues of His time. But in this age of splendors, this era of God, the preeminent Personage, the luminous Orb, the chosen Individual will shine out with such perfections and such power as ultimately to dazzle the minds of every community and group. And since such a Personage is superior to all others in spiritual perfections and heavenly attainments, and is indeed the focal center of divine blessings and the pivot of the circle of light, He will encompass all others, and there is no doubt whatsoever that He will shine out with such power as to gather every soul into His sheltering shade.

When ye consider this matter with care, it will become apparent that this is according to a universal law, which one can find at work in all things: the whole attracteth the part, and in the circle, the center is the pivot of the compasses. Ponder thou upon the Spirit:¹ because He was the focal center of spiritual power, the wellspring of divine bounties, although at the beginning He gathered unto Himself only a very few souls, later on He was able, because of that all-subduing power that He had, to unite within the sheltering Tabernacle of Christendom all the differing sects. Compare the present with the past, and see how great is the difference; thus canst thou arrive at truth and certitude.

The differences among the religions of the world are due to the varying types of minds. So long as the powers of the mind are various, it is certain that men's judgments and opinions will differ one from another. If, however, one single, universal perceptive power be introduced—a power encompassing all the rest—those differing opinions will merge, and a spiritual harmony and oneness will become apparent. For example, when the Christ was made manifest, the minds of the various contemporary peoples, their views, their emotional attitudes, whether they were Romans, Greeks, Syrians, Israelites, or others, were at variance with one another. But once His universal power was brought to bear, it gradually succeeded, after the lapse of three hundred years, in gathering together all those divergent minds under the protection, and within the governance, of one central Point, all sharing the same spiritual emotions in their hearts.

To use a metaphor, when an army is placed under various commanders, each with his own strategy, they will obviously differ as to battle lines and movements of the troops; but once the Supreme Commander, who is thoroughly versed in the arts of war, taketh over, those other plans will disappear, for the supremely gifted general will bring the whole army under his control. This is intended only as a metaphor, not an exact comparison. Now if you should say that each and every one of those other generals is highly skilled in the military art, is thoroughly proficient and experienced, and therefore will not subject himself to the rule of one individual, no matter how

indescribably great, your statement is untenable, for the above situation is demonstrably what cometh to pass, and there is no doubt thereof whatever.

Such is the case with the holy Manifestations of God. Such in particular is the case with the divine reality of the Most Great Name, the Abhá Beauty. When once He standeth revealed unto the assembled peoples of the world and appeareth with such comeliness, such enchantments—alluring as a Joseph in the Egypt of the spirit—He enslaveth all the lovers on earth.

As to those souls who are born into this life as ethereal and radiant entities and yet, on account of their handicaps and trials, are deprived of great and real advantages, and leave the world without having lived to the full—certainly this is a cause for grieving. This is the reason why the universal Manifestations of God unveil Their countenances to man, and endure every calamity and sore affliction, and lay down Their lives as a ransom; it is to make these very people, the ready ones, the ones who have capacity, to become dawning points of light, and to bestow upon them the life that fadeth never. This is the true sacrifice: the offering of oneself, even as did Christ, as a ransom for the life of the world.

As to the influence of holy Beings and the continuance of Their grace to mankind after They have put away Their human form, this is, to Bahá'ís, an indisputable fact. Indeed, the flooding grace, the streaming splendors of the holy Manifestations appear after Their ascension from this world. The exaltation of the Word, the revelation of the power of God, the conversion of God-fearing souls, the bestowal of everlasting life—it was following the Messiah's martyrdom that all these were increased and intensified. In the same way, ever since the ascension of the Blessed Beauty, the bestowals have been more abundant, the spreading light is brighter, the tokens of the Lord's might are more powerful, the influence of the Word is much stronger, and it will not be long before the motion, the heat, the brilliance, the blessings of the Sun of His reality will encompass all the earth.

Grieve thou not over the slow advance of the Bahá'í Cause in that land. This is but the early dawn. Consider how, with the Cause of Christ, three hundred years had to go by, before its great influence was made manifest. Today, not sixty years from its birth, the light of this Faith hath been shed around the planet.

Regarding the health society of which thou art a member, once it cometh under the shelter of this Faith its influence shall increase a hundredfold.

Thou dost observe that love among the Bahá'ís is very great, and that love is the main thing. Just as love's power hath been developed to such a high degree among the Bahá'ís, and is far greater than among the people of other religions, so is it with all else as well; for love is the ground of all things.

Regarding the translation of the Books and Tablets of the Blessed Beauty, ere long will translations be made into every tongue, with power, clarity and grace. At such time as they are translated, conformably to the originals, and with power and grace of style, the splendors of their inner meanings will be shed abroad, and will illumine the eyes of all mankind. Do thy very best to ensure that the translation is in conformity with the original.

The Blessed Beauty proceeded to Haifa on many occasions. Thou beheldest Him there, but thou didst not know Him at that time. It is my hope that thou wilt attain unto the true meeting with Him, which is to behold Him with the inner, not the outer eye.

The essence of Bahá'u'lláh's Teaching is all-embracing love, for love includeth every excellence of humankind. It causeth every soul to go forward. It bestoweth on each one, for a heritage, immortal life. Erelong shalt thou bear witness that His celestial Teachings, the very glory of reality itself, shall light up the skies of the world.

The brief prayer which thou didst write at the close of thy letter was indeed original, touching and beautiful. Recite thou this prayer at all times.

Summary:

The passage responds to a letter inquiring about the potential of the Bahá'í Cause to replace religious rites in England. It asserts that the divine Manifestations of God, particularly in the era of Bahá'u'lláh, possess universal power, attracting and unifying diverse minds. The analogy of a supreme commander bringing order to an army is used to illustrate how one universal perceptive power can harmonize differing opinions. The passage emphasizes that the Bahá'í Cause will gradually exert its influence and unite humanity under its sheltering shade. The sacrifice of Manifestations, like Christ, is portrayed as offering life to those born with handicaps. The enduring grace of holy Beings and the continued influence after their ascension is affirmed. The slow advance of the Bahá'í Cause is likened to the early dawn, with an optimistic outlook for the future. The importance of love among Bahá'ís is highlighted, and the essence of Bahá'u'lláh's teaching is

described as all-embracing love. The passage concludes by praising a prayer written by the recipient.

Key Points:

1. Introduction:

- Response to a letter inquiring about the Bahá'í Cause's potential to replace religious rites in England.

2. Universal Power of Divine Manifestations:

- Manifestations endowed according to the perfections of their age.
- The supreme Personage in the era of Bahá'u'lláh will gather diverse minds under His influence.

3. Analogy of a Supreme Commander:

- The universal perceptive power harmonizes differing opinions.
- The Bahá'í Cause will gradually unite humanity.

4. Sacrifice of Manifestations:

- The sacrifice of Manifestations offers life to those born with handicaps.
- Christ's sacrifice is an example of offering oneself as a ransom for the world.

5. Enduring Grace of Holy Beings:

- The grace and influence of holy Beings continue after their ascension.

6. Optimistic Outlook for the Bahá'í Cause:

- The slow advance is likened to the early dawn.
- Anticipation of increased influence and blessings in the future.

7. Importance of Love Among Bahá'ís:

- Love among Bahá'ís is highlighted as powerful and greater than in other religions.

8. Essence of Bahá'u'lláh's Teaching:

- The essence is described as all-embracing love.

9. Encouragement for Translation Work:

- Assurance that translations will be made into every tongue.
- Emphasis on conformity to the original for powerful and graceful translations.

10. Personal Note and Prayer:

- Reflection on past meetings with Bahá'u'lláh.
- Praise for an original and beautiful prayer written by the recipient.

Questions and Answers:

1. What does the passage emphasize about the universal power of divine Manifestations in the era of Bahá'u'lláh?

- Answer: The supreme Personage in the era of Bahá'u'lláh possesses universal power, attracting and unifying diverse minds.

2. How is the analogy of a supreme commander used in the passage?

- Answer: The analogy illustrates how one universal perceptive power can harmonize differing opinions, using the Bahá'í Cause as an example.

3. What does the passage suggest about the enduring grace of holy Beings after their ascension?

- Answer: The grace and influence of holy Beings continue after their ascension, intensifying with time.

4. How does the passage describe the slow advance of the Bahá'í Cause, and what is the optimistic outlook for the future?

- Answer: The slow advance is likened to the early dawn, with an optimistic outlook for increased influence and blessings in the future.

5. What is emphasized as the essence of Bahá'u'lláh's teaching, and how is the importance of love among Bahá'ís portrayed?

- Answer: The essence of Bahá'u'lláh's teaching is described as all-embracing love. Love among Bahá'ís is portrayed as powerful and greater than in other religions.

– 32 –

O ye handmaids of the Lord! In this century—the century of the Almighty Lord—the Daystar of the Realms above, the Light of Truth, shineth in its meridian splendor and its rays illuminate all regions. For this is the age of the Ancient Beauty, the day of the revelation of the might and power of the Most Great Name—may my life be offered up as a sacrifice for His loved ones.

In the ages to come, though the Cause of God may rise and grow a hundredfold and the shade of the Sadratu'l-Muntahá shelter all mankind, yet this present century shall stand unrivalled, for it hath witnessed the breaking of that Morn and the rising of that Sun. This century is, verily, the source of His Light and the dayspring of His Revelation. Future ages and generations shall behold the diffusion of its radiance and the manifestations of its signs.

Wherefore, exert yourselves, haply ye may obtain your full share and portion of His bestowals.

Summary:

The passage addresses the handmaids of the Lord, emphasizing the significance of the current century as the age of the Almighty Lord. It declares that this century is unparalleled, witnessing the manifestation of the Most Great Name and the revelation of the Light of Truth. While acknowledging the potential growth of the Cause in the future, it stresses the unique status of the

present century and encourages believers to exert themselves to obtain their share of divine bestowals.

Key Points:

1. Introduction:

- Address to the handmaids of the Lord.
- Emphasis on the current century as the age of the Almighty Lord.

2. Significance of the Current Century:

- Declaration that the present century stands unrivaled.
- Witnessed the breaking of the Morn and the rising of the Sun.
- Source of His Light and the dayspring of His Revelation.

3. Future Manifestations:

- Prediction that future ages will witness the diffusion of the century's radiance.
- Manifestations of its signs will be evident in subsequent generations.

4. Exhortation to Exertion:

- Encouragement to exert themselves to obtain their full share of divine bestowals.
- Implicit call to active participation in the Cause of God.

Questions and Answers:

1. What is the significance of the current century according to the passage?

- Answer: The current century is deemed unparalleled, witnessing the manifestation of the Most Great Name and the revelation of the Light of Truth.

2. How does the passage describe the future of the Cause of God?

- Answer: While acknowledging potential growth in future ages, the passage stresses the unique status of the present century and its significance in witnessing divine manifestations.

3. What is the encouragement given to believers in the passage?

- Answer: Believers are encouraged to exert themselves to obtain their full share and portion of divine bestowals.

4. What terms are used to describe the current century's role in the Divine Plan?

- Answer: The current century is described as the source of His Light and the dayspring of His Revelation.

5. How does the passage convey the uniqueness of the present century?

- Answer: The passage emphasizes that the present century has witnessed the breaking of the Morn and the rising of the Sun, making it unrivaled and unique in its significance.

O servant of God! We have noted what thou didst write to Jináb-i-Ibn-Abhar, and thy question regarding the verse: “Whoso layeth claim to a Revelation direct from God, ere the expiration of a full thousand years, such a man is assuredly a lying impostor.”

The meaning of this is that any individual who, before the expiry of a full thousand years—years known and clearly established by common usage and requiring no interpretation—should lay claim to a Revelation direct from God, even though he should reveal certain signs, that man is assuredly false and an impostor.

This is not a reference to the Universal Manifestation, for it is clearly set forth in the Holy Writings that centuries, nay thousands of years, must pass on to completion, before a Manifestation like unto this Manifestation shall appear again.

It is possible, however, that after the completion of a full thousand years, certain Holy Beings will be empowered to deliver a Revelation: this, however, will not be through a Universal Manifestation. Wherefore every day of the cycle of the Blessed Beauty is in reality equal to one year, and every year of it is equal to a thousand years.

Consider, for example, the sun: its transit from one zodiacal sign to the next occurreth within a short period of time, yet only after a long period doth it attain the plenitude of its resplendency, its heat and glory, in the sign of Leo. It must first complete one full revolution through the other constellations before it will enter the sign of Leo again, to blaze out in its full splendor. In its other stations, it revealeth not the fullness of its heat and light.

The substance is, that prior to the completion of a thousand years, no individual may presume to breathe a word. All must consider themselves to be of the order of subjects, submissive and obedient to the commandments of God and the laws of the House of Justice. Should any deviate by so much as a needle's point from the decrees of the Universal House of Justice, or falter in his compliance therewith, then is he of the outcast and rejected.

As to the cycle of the Blessed Beauty—the times of the Greatest Name—this is not limited to a thousand or two thousand years....

When it is said that the period of a thousand years beginneth with the Manifestation of the Blessed Beauty and every day thereof is a thousand years, the intent is a reference to the cycle of the Blessed Beauty, which in this context will extend over many ages into the unborn reaches of time.

Summary:

The passage explains the meaning of the verse stating that anyone claiming a Revelation from God within a thousand years is a false impostor. It clarifies that this does not refer to the Universal Manifestation, which will only reappear after centuries or thousands of years. The concept of a day in the cycle of the Blessed Beauty being equal to a thousand years is elaborated, emphasizing

the need for humility and obedience to the laws of God. The cycle of the Blessed Beauty extends over many ages.

Key Points:

1. Interpretation of the Verse:

- Claims to a Revelation before a full thousand years are considered false.
- Refers to individuals revealing signs, not the Universal Manifestation.

2. Universal Manifestation and Timeframe:

- Clarifies that the Universal Manifestation will not appear until centuries or thousands of years pass.
- Not applicable within the first thousand years after a Manifestation.

3. Temporal Understanding of the Cycle:

- Each day in the cycle of the Blessed Beauty is equal to a thousand years.
- Example with the sun's transit through zodiacal signs.

4. Obedience and Submission:

- All individuals must be submissive to God's commandments and laws.
- Deviation from the Universal House of Justice decrees is unacceptable.

5. Extension of the Cycle:

- The cycle of the Blessed Beauty extends over many ages into the future.
- The concept of a day being equal to a thousand years signifies an extended timeframe.

Questions and Answers:

1. What does the verse mean regarding the claim to a Revelation within a thousand years?

- Answer: It means that any individual claiming a Revelation within a full thousand years is considered false and an impostor.

2. How is the Universal Manifestation's reappearance related to the timeframe mentioned in the verse?

- Answer: The reappearance of the Universal Manifestation is expected after centuries or thousands of years, not within the first thousand years.

3. What is the temporal understanding of a day in the cycle of the Blessed Beauty?

- Answer: Each day in the cycle is symbolically equivalent to a thousand years, emphasizing a prolonged and significant timeframe.

4. What is the importance of obedience and submission in this context?

- Answer:* All individuals are required to be submissive to God's commandments and obedient to the laws of the Universal House of Justice.

5. How long does the cycle of the Blessed Beauty extend according to the passage?

- Answer: The cycle extends over many ages into the unborn reaches of time, emphasizing its enduring nature.

O thou who art serving the world of humanity! Thy letter was received and from its contents we felt exceedingly glad. It was a decisive proof and a brilliant evidence. It is appropriate and befitting that in this illumined age—the age of the progress of the world of humanity—we should be self-sacrificing and should serve the human race. Every universal cause is divine and every particular one is temporal. The principles of the divine Manifestations of God were, therefore, all-universal and all-inclusive.

Every imperfect soul is self-centered and thinketh only of his own good. But as his thoughts expand a little he will begin to think of the welfare and comfort of his family. If his ideas still more widen, his concern will be the felicity of his fellow citizens; and if still they widen, he will be thinking of the glory of his land and of his race. But when ideas and views reach the utmost degree of expansion and attain the stage of perfection, then will he be interested in the exaltation of humankind. He will then be the well-wisher of all men and the seeker of the weal and prosperity of all lands. This is indicative of perfection.

Thus, the divine Manifestations of God had a universal and all-inclusive conception. They endeavored for the sake of everyone's life and engaged in the service of universal education. The area of their aims was not limited—nay, rather, it was wide and all-inclusive.

Therefore, ye must also be thinking of everyone, so that mankind may be educated, character moderated and this world may turn into a Garden of Eden.

Love ye all religions and all races with a love that is true and sincere and show that love through deeds and not through the tongue; for the latter hath no importance, as the majority of men are, in speech, well-wishers, while action is the best.

Summary:

The passage emphasizes the importance of self-sacrifice and service to humanity in the current age of progress. It discusses the evolution of one's concerns from self-centeredness to the well-being of all humankind as a sign of spiritual growth. The universal and all-inclusive conception of divine Manifestations is highlighted, indicating their service for the education and prosperity of all. The

reader is encouraged to broaden their perspective, love all religions and races genuinely, and demonstrate love through actions rather than mere words.

Key Points:

1. Self-Sacrifice and Service:

- The age of progress calls for self-sacrifice and service to humanity.
- Divine Manifestations served universal causes with all-inclusive principles.

2. Evolution of Concerns:

- Imperfect souls are initially self-centered.
- Spiritual growth expands concerns to family, fellow citizens, country, and ultimately, all humankind.

3. Universal and All-Inclusive Conception:

- Divine Manifestations had a broad, all-inclusive conception.
- They aimed at universal education and the welfare of all humankind.

4. Educating and Moderating Character:

- The goal is to educate mankind and moderate character.
- Service to universal education is essential for turning the world into a Garden of Eden.

5. Love for All Religions and Races:

- Genuine love for all religions and races is encouraged.
- Actions speak louder than words, emphasizing the importance of demonstrating love through deeds.

Questions and Answers:

1. What is the significance of self-sacrifice and service to humanity in the current age?

- Answer: Self-sacrifice and service to humanity are essential in the age of progress.

2. How does spiritual growth manifest in terms of concerns?

- Answer: Spiritual growth expands concerns from self-centeredness to the well-being of family, fellow citizens, country, and ultimately, all humankind.

3. What were the aims of the divine Manifestations in terms of service?

- Answer: Divine Manifestations aimed at universal education and the welfare of all humankind.

4. What is the goal regarding character and education?

- Answer: The goal is to educate mankind and moderate character for the transformation of the world into a Garden of Eden.

5. Why is the emphasis on demonstrating love through actions rather than words?

- Answer: Actions have more significance, as many may express well-wishing in speech, but action is the true demonstration of love and sincerity.

O army of God! A letter signed jointly by all of you hath been received. It was most eloquent and full of flavor, and reading it was a delight.

Ye had written of the fasting month. Fortunate are ye to have obeyed the commandment of God, and kept this fast during the holy season. For this material fast is an outer token of the spiritual fast; it is a symbol of self-restraint, the withholding of oneself from all appetites of the self, taking on the characteristics of the spirit, being carried away by the breathings of heaven and catching fire from the love of God.

Your letter also betokened your unity and the closeness of your hearts. It is my hope that the west, through the boundless grace that God is pouring down in this new era, will become the east, the dawning-point of the Sun of Truth, and western believers the daysprings of light, and manifestors of the signs of God; that they will be guarded from the doubts of the heedless and will stay firm and unmovable in the Covenant and Testament; that they will toil by day and by night until they awaken those who sleep, and make mindful those who are unaware, and bring in the outcast to be intimates of the inner circle, and bestow upon the destitute their portion of eternal grace. Let them be heralds of the Kingdom, and call out to the denizens of this nether world, and summon them to enter the realm on high.

O army of God! Today, in this world, every people is wandering astray in its own desert, moving here and there according to the dictates of its fancies and whims, pursuing its own particular caprice. Amongst all the teeming masses of the earth, only this community of the Most Great Name is free and clear of human schemes and hath no selfish purpose to promote. Alone amongst them all, this people hath arisen with aims purified of self, following the Teachings of God, most eagerly toiling and striving toward a single goal: to turn this nether dust into high heaven, to make of this world a mirror for the Kingdom, to change this world into a different world, and cause all humankind to adopt the ways of righteousness and a new manner of life.

O army of God! Through the protection and help vouchsafed by the Blessed Beauty—may my life be a sacrifice to His loved ones—ye must conduct yourselves in such a manner that ye may stand out distinguished and brilliant as the sun among other souls. Should any one of you enter a city, he should become a center of attraction by reason of his sincerity, his faithfulness and love, his honesty and fidelity, his truthfulness and loving-kindness towards all the peoples of the world, so that the people of that city may cry out and say: “This man is unquestionably a Bahá’í, for his manners, his behavior, his conduct, his morals, his nature, and disposition reflect the attributes of the Bahá’ís.” Not until ye attain this station can ye be said to have been faithful to the Covenant and Testament of God. For He hath, through irrefutable Texts, entered into a binding Covenant with us all, requiring us to act in accordance with His sacred instructions and counsels.

O army of God! The time hath come for the effects and perfections of the Most Great Name to be made manifest in this excellent age, so as to establish, beyond any doubt, that this era is the era of Bahá’u’lláh, and this age is distinguished above all other ages.

O army of God! Whosoever ye behold a person whose entire attention is directed toward the Cause of God; whose only aim is this, to make the Word of God to take effect; who, day and night, with pure intent, is rendering service to the Cause; from whose behavior not the slightest trace of egotism or private motives is discerned—who, rather, wandereth distracted in the wilderness of the love of God, and drinketh only from the cup of the knowledge of God, and is utterly engrossed in spreading the sweet savors of God, and is enamored of the holy verses of the Kingdom of God—know ye for a certainty that this individual will be supported and reinforced by heaven; that like unto the morning star, he will forever gleam brightly out of the skies of eternal grace. But if he

show the slightest taint of selfish desires and self love, his efforts will lead to nothing and he will be destroyed and left hopeless at the last.

O army of God! Praise be to God, Bahá'u'lláh hath lifted the chains from off the necks of humankind, and hath set man free from all that trammelled him, and told him: Ye are the fruits of one tree and the leaves of one branch; be ye compassionate and kind to all the human race. Deal ye with strangers the same as with friends, cherish ye others just as ye would your own. See foes as friends; see demons as angels; give to the tyrant the same great love ye show the loyal and true, and even as gazelles from the scented cities of Khatá and Khutan¹ offer up sweet musk to the ravening wolf. Be ye a refuge to the fearful; bring ye rest and peace to the disturbed; make ye a provision for the destitute; be a treasury of riches for the poor; be a healing medicine for those who suffer pain; be ye doctor and nurse to the ailing; promote ye friendship, and honor, and conciliation, and devotion to God, in this world of nonexistence.

O army of God! Make ye a mighty effort: perchance ye can flood this earth with light, that this mud hut, the world, may become the Abhá Paradise. The dark hath taken over, and the brute traits prevail. This world of man is now an arena for wild beasts, a field where the ignorant, the heedless, seize their chance. The souls of men are ravening wolves and animals with blinded eyes, they are either deadly poison or useless weeds—all except for a very few who indeed do nurture altruistic aims and plans for the well-being of their fellow men: but ye must in this matter—that is, the serving of humankind—lay down your very lives, and as ye yield yourselves, rejoice.

O army of God! The Exalted One, the Báb, gave up His life. The Blessed Perfection gave up a hundred lives at every breath. He bore calamities. He suffered anguish. He was imprisoned. He was chained. He was made homeless and was banished to distant lands. Finally, then, He lived out His days in the Most Great Prison. Likewise, a great multitude of the lovers of God who followed this path have tasted the honey of martyrdom and they gave up everything—life, possessions, kindred—all they had. How many homes were reduced to rubble; how many dwellings were broken into and pillaged; how many a noble building went to the ground; how many a palace was battered into a tomb. And all this came about that humankind might be illumined, that ignorance might yield to knowledge, that men of earth might become men of heaven, that discord and dissension might be torn out by the roots, and the Kingdom of Peace become established over all the world. Strive ye now that this bounty become manifest, and this best-beloved of all hopes be realized in splendor throughout the community of man.

O army of God! Beware lest ye harm any soul, or make any heart to sorrow; lest ye wound any man with your words, be he known to you or a stranger, be he friend or foe. Pray ye for all; ask ye that all be blessed, all be forgiven. Beware, beware, lest any of you seek vengeance, even against one who is thirsting for your blood. Beware, beware, lest ye offend the feelings of another, even though he be an evildoer, and he wish you ill. Look ye not upon the creatures, turn ye to their Creator. See ye not the never-yielding people, see but the Lord of Hosts. Gaze ye not down upon the dust, gaze upward at the shining sun, which hath caused every patch of darksome earth to glow with light.

O army of God! When calamity striketh, be ye patient and composed. However afflictive your sufferings may be, stay ye undisturbed, and with perfect confidence in the abounding grace of God, brave ye the tempest of tribulations and fiery ordeals.

Last year a number of the unfaithful, both from within and from without, both known to us and strangers, took before the Sultán of Turkey slanderous charges against these homeless exiles, bringing against us grave accusations with no basis in fact. The Government, conformably with prudence, determined to look into these charges, and dispatched a Commission of Investigation to

this city. It is obvious what an opportunity this afforded our ill-wishers, and what a storm they unleashed, all this beyond description by tongue or pen. Only one who witnessed it could know what a turmoil they created and what an earthquake of anguish was the result. And notwithstanding this, the response was to depend utterly upon God, and to remain composed, confident, long-suffering, undisturbed, to such a degree that a person knowing nothing of the situation would have thought us easy of heart and mind, perfectly happy, thriving and at peace.

Then it came about that the accusers themselves, those who had made the defamatory charges against us, joined with the members of the Commission to investigate the accusations, so that plaintiffs, witnesses and judge were all one and the same, and the conclusion was foregone. Nevertheless, to be fair, it must be stated that up to now His Majesty the Sultán of Turkey hath paid no heed to these false charges, this defamation, these fables and traduccements, and hath acted with justice....

O Thou Provider! Thou hast breathed over the friends in the West the sweet fragrance of the Holy Spirit, and with the light of divine guidance Thou hast lit up the western sky. Thou hast made those who were once remote to draw near unto Thyself; Thou hast turned strangers into loving friends; Thou hast awakened those who slept; Thou hast made the heedless mindful.

O Thou Provider! Assist Thou these noble friends to win Thy good pleasure, and make them well-wishers of stranger and friend alike. Bring them into the world that abideth forever; grant them a portion of heavenly grace; cause them to be true Bahá'ís, sincerely of God; save them from outward semblances, and establish them firmly in the truth. Make them signs and tokens of the Kingdom, luminous stars above the horizons of this nether life. Make them to be a comfort and a solace to humankind and servants to the peace of the world. Exhilarate them with the wine of Thy counsel, and grant that all of them may tread the path of Thy commandments.

O Thou Provider! The dearest wish of this servant of Thy Threshold is to behold the friends of east and west in close embrace; to see all the members of human society gathered with love in a single great assemblage, even as individual drops of water collected in one mighty sea; to behold them all as birds in one garden of roses, as pearls of one ocean, as leaves of one tree, as rays of one sun.

Thou art the Mighty, the Powerful, and Thou art the God of strength, the Omnipotent, the All-Seeing.

Summary:

The letter emphasizes the significance of fasting as both a material and spiritual practice, highlighting unity, self-restraint, and obedience to God's commandments. It urges the believers to be beacons of light, living the teachings with sincerity, love, and service to humankind. The message stresses the importance of manifesting the perfections of the Most Great Name and becoming channels for the transformative power of Bahá'u'lláh's Revelation. It recounts the challenges faced, the unwavering response to slander, and the necessity of patience in times of

calamity. The closing prayers seek assistance, divine guidance, and unity among believers worldwide.

Key Points:

1. Significance of fasting as a symbol of self-restraint and spiritual transformation.
2. Call for believers in the West to become beacons of light and manifestors of God's signs.
3. Emphasis on conducting oneself with sincerity, love, and adherence to the Covenant.
4. Exhortation to face challenges with patience, confidence in God, and composure.
5. Narration of past challenges and the importance of remaining undisturbed.

Questions and Answers:

1. What is the significance of fasting according to the letter?
 - Fasting is seen as both a material and spiritual practice, symbolizing self-restraint, characteristics of the spirit, and being carried away by the love of God.
2. What qualities are believers urged to exhibit when entering a city?
 - Believers are encouraged to become centers of attraction through sincerity, faithfulness, love, honesty, fidelity, truthfulness, and kindness towards all people.
3. How does the letter describe the state of the world and the unique position of the Bahá'í community?
 - The world is described as a desert where people wander astray. The Bahá'í community is depicted as the only group free from selfish motives, arising with purified aims for the betterment of humanity.
4. What challenges does the letter mention in relation to false accusations?
 - False accusations were made against the Bahá'í community, leading to investigations. Despite the turmoil, the believers responded with confidence in God, patience, and undisturbed composure.
5. What is the central theme of the closing prayers in the letter?
 - The closing prayers seek divine assistance, unity among believers worldwide, and express the desire to witness the friends from the East and West in close embrace, fostering a global sense of love and unity.

– 36 –

O ye two favored handmaids of the Lord! The letter from Mother Beecher hath been received, and truly it spoke for you both, wherefore I address the two of you together. This seemeth very good to me, for ye two pure beings are even as a single precious gem, ye are two boughs branched from a single tree; ye both adore the same Beloved, ye both are longing for the same resplendent Sun.

My hope is that all the handmaids of God in that region will unite like unto the waves of one unending sea; for although blown about as the wind listeth, these are separate in themselves, yet in truth are they all at one with the boundless deep.

How good it is if the friends be as close as sheaves of light, if they stand together side by side in a firm unbroken line. For now have the rays of reality from the Sun of the world of existence, united in adoration all the worshippers of this light; and these rays have, through infinite grace, gathered all peoples together within this wide-spreading shelter; therefore must all souls become

as one soul, and all hearts as one heart. Let all be set free from the multiple identities that were born of passion and desire, and in the oneness of their love for God find a new way of life.

O ye two handmaids of God! Now is the time for you to become as bounteous cups that are filled to overflowing, and even as the reviving gusts that blow from the Abhá Paradise, to scatter the fragrance of musk across that land. Release yourselves from this world's life, and at every stage long ye for nonexistence; for when the ray returneth to the sun, it is wiped out, and when the drop cometh to the sea, it vanisheth, and when the true lover findeth his Beloved, he yieldeth up his soul.

Until a being setteth his foot in the plane of sacrifice, he is bereft of every favor and grace; and this plane of sacrifice is the realm of dying to the self, that the radiance of the living God may then shine forth. The martyr's field is the place of detachment from self, that the anthems of eternity may be upraised. Do all ye can to become wholly weary of self, and bind yourselves to that Countenance of Splendors; and once ye have reached such heights of servitude, ye will find, gathered within your shadow, all created things. This is boundless grace; this is the highest sovereignty; this is the life that dieth not. All else save this is at the last but manifest perdition and great loss.

Praise be to God, the gate of boundless grace is opened wide, the heavenly table is set, the servants of the Merciful and His handmaids are present at the feast. Strive ye to receive your share of this eternal food, so that ye shall be loved and cherished in this world and the next.

Summary:

The letter urges two handmaids of God to unite like waves of an unending sea. It emphasizes the importance of unity, likening believers to sheaves of light standing together. The call is for souls to become one, free from multiple identities born of passion, and to embrace a new way of life in the oneness of their love for God. The letter encourages the two recipients to become overflowing cups and reviving gusts, scattering the fragrance of musk. It introduces the concept of sacrifice, stating that until one reaches the plane of sacrifice, they are bereft of divine favor. The letter

concludes with the declaration that the gate of boundless grace is open, inviting believers to partake in the heavenly feast and receive eternal blessings.

Key Points:

1. Unity among believers is emphasized, comparing them to waves of an unending sea.
2. The imagery of sheaves of light standing together highlights the importance of a united front.
3. The call for souls to become one, free from multiple identities, in their love for God.
4. Encouragement to embrace the concepts of sacrifice and detachment from self for spiritual growth.
5. The invitation to partake in the boundless grace and eternal feast provided by God.

Questions and Answers:

1. What is the central metaphor used to describe the unity of believers?
 - Believers are likened to waves of an unending sea, highlighting the importance of unity.
2. What imagery is used to emphasize the united front of believers?
 - The imagery of believers being like sheaves of light standing together is used to stress the unity among them.
3. What is the suggested new way of life for believers in the letter?
 - Believers are encouraged to release themselves from the life of this world and long for nonexistence, reaching new heights of servitude.
4. What is the significance of the plane of sacrifice in the letter?
 - The plane of sacrifice is described as the realm of dying to the self, allowing the radiance of the living God to shine forth.
5. How does the letter conclude, and what invitation is extended to believers?
 - The letter concludes with the assurance that the gate of boundless grace is open, inviting believers to partake in the heavenly feast and receive eternal blessings.

– 37 –

O ye dear friends of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá! A blessed letter hath been received from you, telling of the election of a Spiritual Assembly. It hath rejoiced my heart to know that, God be praised, the friends in that area, with absolute unity, fellowship and love, have held this new election and were successful in voting for souls who are sanctified, are favored at the Holy Threshold and are well known amongst the friends to be staunch and firm in the Covenant.

Now must those elected representatives arise to serve with spirituality and joy, with purity of intent, with strong attraction to the fragrances of the Almighty, and well supported by the Holy Spirit. Let them raise up the banner of guidance, and as soldiers of the Company on high, let them exalt God’s Word, spread abroad His sweet saviors, educate the souls of men, and promote the Most Great Peace.

Truly, blessed souls have been elected. The moment I read their names, I felt a thrill of spiritual joy to know that, praised be God, persons have been raised up in that country who are servants of the Kingdom, and ready to lay down their lives for Him Who hath neither likeness nor peer.

O ye dear friends of mine! Light up this Assembly with the splendor of God's love. Make it ring out with the joyous music of the hallowed spheres, make it thrive on those foods that are served at the Lord's Supper, at the heavenly banquet table of God. Come ye together in gladness unalloyed, and at the beginning of the meeting, recite ye this prayer:

O Thou Lord of the Kingdom! Though our bodies be gathered here together, yet our spellbound hearts are carried away by Thy love, and yet are we transported by the rays of Thy resplendent face. Weak though we be, we await the revelations of Thy might and power. Poor though we be, with neither goods nor means, still take we riches from the treasures of Thy Kingdom. Drops though we be, still do we draw from out Thy ocean deeps. Motes though we be, still do we gleam in the glory of Thy splendid Sun.

O Thou our Provider! Send down Thine aid, that each one gathered here may become a lighted candle, each one a center of attraction, each one a summoner to Thy heavenly realms, till at last we make this nether world the mirror image of Thy Paradise.

O ye dear friends of mine! It is incumbent upon the assemblies of those regions to be connected one with another and to correspond with one another, and also to communicate with the assemblies of the east, thus to become agencies for union throughout the world.

O ye spiritual friends! Such must be your constancy that should the evil-wishers put every believer to death and only one remain, that one, singly and alone, will withstand all the peoples of the earth, and will go on scattering far and wide the sweet and holy fragrances of God. Wherefore, should any fearsome news, any word of terrifying events, reach you from the Holy Land, see to it that ye waver not, be ye not stricken by grief, be ye not shaken. Rather, rise ye up instantly, with iron resolve, and serve ye the Kingdom of God.

This Servant of the Lord's Threshold hath been in peril at all times. He is in peril now. At no time have I had any hope of safety, and my dearest wish is this: to drink of the martyr's bounteous and brimful cup, and die on the field of sacrifice, delighting in that wine which is the most precious of God's gifts. This is my highest hope, this my most vehement desire.

We hear that the Tablets of *Ishráqát* (Splendors), *Ṭarázát* (Ornaments), *Bishárát* (Glad Tidings), *Tajallíyyát* (Effulgences), and *Kalimát* (Words of Paradise) have been translated and published in those regions. In these Tablets will ye have a model of how to be and how to live.

Summary:

The letter commends the friends for successfully electing a Spiritual Assembly characterized by unity and love. It encourages the elected representatives to serve with spirituality, joy, and a pure intent, raising the banner of guidance and promoting the Most Great Peace. The letter expresses spiritual joy at the election of dedicated individuals willing to lay down their lives for the Cause. It calls for the Assembly to be illuminated by God's love, to thrive on heavenly sustenance, and emphasizes the importance of spiritual constancy, unity among assemblies, and communication

between regions. The letter concludes with a call for steadfastness, assuring that even in times of peril, believers should not waver but serve the Kingdom of God.

Key Points:

1. Commendation for the successful election of a Spiritual Assembly marked by unity and fellowship.
2. Encouragement for elected representatives to serve with spirituality, joy, and a pure intent.
3. The call to raise the banner of guidance, promote the Most Great Peace, and exalt God's Word.
4. Expressing spiritual joy at the election of dedicated individuals ready to sacrifice for the Cause.
5. Emphasis on the importance of illuminating the Assembly with God's love, fostering unity among assemblies, and maintaining communication between regions.

Questions and Answers:

1. What qualities should the elected representatives possess according to the letter?
- Elected representatives should serve with spirituality, joy, purity of intent, and be well-supported by the Holy Spirit.
2. What is the desired atmosphere for the Spiritual Assembly, as mentioned in the letter?
- The Assembly should be illuminated with the splendor of God's love and thrive on the heavenly sustenance served at the Lord's Supper.
3. How does the letter advise believers to respond to any fearsome news or terrifying events from the Holy Land?
- Believers are advised not to waver, be stricken by grief, or shaken. Instead, they should rise up instantly, with iron resolve, and continue serving the Kingdom of God.
4. What is the highest hope and most vehement desire expressed by 'Abdu'l-Bahá in the letter?
- 'Abdu'l-Bahá expresses the highest hope and most vehement desire to drink of the martyr's bounteous and brimful cup, and die on the field of sacrifice.
5. What significance is given to the translated Tablets in the letter?
- The Tablets of Ishráqát, Tarázát, Bishárát, Tajallíyyát, and Kalimát are presented as models for believers on how to be and how to live.

– 38 –

O handmaid of God, who tremblest even as a fresh and tender branch in the winds of the love of God! I have read thy letter, which telleth of thine abundant love, thine intense devotion, and of thy being occupied with the remembrance of thy Lord.

Depend thou upon God. Forsake thine own will and cling to His, set aside thine own desires and lay hold of His, that thou mayest become an example, holy, spiritual, and of the Kingdom, unto His handmaids.

Know thou, O handmaid, that in the sight of Bahá, women are accounted the same as men, and God hath created all humankind in His own image, and after His own likeness. That is, men and women alike are the revealers of His names and attributes, and from the spiritual viewpoint there is no difference between them. Whosoever draweth nearer to God, that one is the most favored,

whether man or woman. How many a handmaid, ardent and devoted, hath, within the sheltering shade of Bahá, proved superior to the men, and surpassed the famous of the earth.

The House of Justice, however, according to the explicit text of the Law of God, is confined to men; this for a wisdom of the Lord God's, which will ere long be made manifest as clearly as the sun at high noon.

As to you, O ye other handmaids who are enamored of the heavenly fragrances, arrange ye holy gatherings, and found ye Spiritual Assemblies, for these are the basis for spreading the sweet savors of God, exalting His Word, uplifting the lamp of His grace, promulgating His religion and promoting His Teachings, and what bounty is there greater than this? These Spiritual Assemblies are aided by the Spirit of God. Their defender is 'Abdu'l-Bahá. Over them He spreadeth His wings. What bounty is there greater than this? These Spiritual Assemblies are shining lamps and heavenly gardens, from which the fragrances of holiness are diffused over all regions, and the lights of knowledge are shed abroad over all created things. From them the spirit of life streameth in every direction. They, indeed, are the potent sources of the progress of man, at all times and under all conditions. What bounty is there greater than this?

Summary:

The letter is addressed to a devoted handmaid of God and emphasizes the equality of men and women in the sight of Bahá. It encourages the handmaid to depend on God, forsake personal will for His, and become an example of holiness and spirituality. The equality of men and women is highlighted, with instances of ardent and devoted handmaids surpassing famous men. However, the letter explains that, according to the explicit text of the Law of God, the Universal House of Justice is confined to men. The handmaids are urged to arrange holy gatherings, establish Spiritual

Assemblies, and spread the sweet savors of God, with these assemblies being described as shining lamps and heavenly gardens.

Key Points:

1. Emphasis on the equality of men and women in the sight of Bahá.
2. Encouragement for the handmaid to depend on God, forsake personal will, and become an example of holiness.
3. Recognition of the achievements of ardent and devoted handmaids, surpassing famous men.
4. Clarification that the Universal House of Justice is confined to men according to the explicit text of the Law of God.
5. Urging handmaids to establish Spiritual Assemblies, arrange holy gatherings, and spread the sweet savors of God.

Questions and Answers:

1. What is emphasized regarding the equality of men and women in the letter?
- In the sight of Bahá, men and women are accounted the same, created in the image and likeness of God. Whosoever draws nearer to God is the most favored, regardless of gender.
2. How are handmaids encouraged to become an example according to the letter?
- Handmaids are encouraged to depend on God, forsake personal will, and cling to His will to become an example of holiness and spirituality.
3. What is the stated role of the Universal House of Justice according to the letter?
- According to the explicit text of the Law of God, the Universal House of Justice is confined to men, and the wisdom behind this will be made manifest in the future.
4. What role are handmaids urged to play in the letter?
- Handmaids are urged to arrange holy gatherings, establish Spiritual Assemblies, and spread the sweet savors of God, as these assemblies are described as shining lamps and heavenly gardens.
5. How does the letter describe the achievements of Spiritual Assemblies and their importance?
- Spiritual Assemblies are described as shining lamps and heavenly gardens, potent sources of progress for humanity, spreading fragrances of holiness and lights of knowledge in all regions.

– 39 –

O handmaid of God! Thy letter hath been received, bringing its news that an Assembly hath been established in that city.

Look ye not upon the fewness of thy numbers, rather, seek ye out hearts that are pure. One consecrated soul is preferable to a thousand other souls. If a small number of people gather lovingly together, with absolute purity and sanctity, with their hearts free of the world, experiencing the emotions of the Kingdom and the powerful magnetic forces of the Divine, and being at one in their happy fellowship, that gathering will exert its influence over all the earth. The nature of that band of people, the words they speak, the deeds they do, will unleash the bestowals of Heaven, and provide a foretaste of eternal bliss. The hosts of the Company on high will defend them, and the angels of the Abhá Paradise, in continuous succession, will come down to their aid.

The meaning of “angels” is the confirmations of God and His celestial powers. Likewise angels are blessed beings who have severed all ties with this nether world, have been released from the chains of self and the desires of the flesh, and anchored their hearts to the heavenly realms of the Lord. These are of the Kingdom, heavenly; these are of God, spiritual; these are revealers of God’s abounding grace; these are dawning-points of His spiritual bestowals.

O handmaid of God! Praise be to Him, thy dear husband hath perceived the sweet scents that blow from the gardens of heaven. Now, as day followeth day, must thou, through the love of God, and thine own good actions, draw him ever closer to the Faith.

Those were indeed dire events in San Francisco.¹ Disasters of this kind should serve to awaken the people, and diminish the love of their hearts for this inconstant world. It is in this nether world that such tragic things take place: this is the cup that yieldeth bitter wine.

Summary:

The letter addresses a handmaid of God, acknowledging the establishment of an Assembly in the city. It emphasizes the spiritual power of a consecrated few over a larger group, encouraging pure hearts and unity. The influence of a gathering with pure intentions is described as unleashing the bestowals of Heaven. The term "angels" is explained as the confirmations of God and blessed beings detached from worldly ties. The letter touches upon the husband's spiritual perception and urges the handmaid to draw him closer to the Faith. Reference is made to dire events in San

Francisco, framing disasters as opportunities for awakening and a reminder of the impermanence of the material world.

Key Points:

1. Importance of pure hearts and unity in a small gathering.
2. Spiritual power and influence of a consecrated few.
3. Definition of "angels" as confirmations of God and detached, blessed beings.
4. Encouragement to draw the husband closer to the Faith through love and good actions.
5. Reflection on disasters as opportunities for awakening and reminders of the impermanence of the material world.

Questions and Answers:

1. What is emphasized regarding the influence of a consecrated few in the letter?
 - A small gathering with pure hearts and unity has a powerful spiritual influence, unleashing the bestowals of Heaven and providing a foretaste of eternal bliss.
2. How does the letter define the term "angels"?
 - "Angels" are described as the confirmations of God and blessed beings who have severed ties with the material world, anchoring their hearts to the heavenly realms.
3. What is the suggested approach to draw the husband closer to the Faith according to the letter?
 - The handmaid is urged to draw her husband closer to the Faith through the love of God and her own good actions.
4. What is the perspective on dire events in San Francisco mentioned in the letter?
 - Disasters, like those in San Francisco, are seen as opportunities for awakening and reminders of the impermanence of the material world.
5. What qualities are encouraged for the small gathering mentioned in the letter?
 - The gathering is encouraged to have hearts free of the world, experience the emotions of the Kingdom, and be in happy fellowship, exerting spiritual influence over the earth.

– 40 –

O ye whom ‘Abdu’l-Bahá loveth! I have read your reports with great joy; they are of a nature to cheer and refresh the heart and gladden the soul. If this Assembly, through the holy breathings of the All-Merciful and His divine confirmations, endure and remain fixed and firm, it shall produce notable results and it shall succeed in enterprises of great moment.

The Spiritual Assemblies to be established in this Age of God, this holy century, have, it is indisputable, had neither peer nor likeness in the cycles gone before. For those assemblages that wielded power were based on the support of mighty leaders of men, while these Assemblies are based on the support of the Beauty of Abhá. The defenders and patrons of those other assemblages were either a prince, or a king, or a chief priest, or the mass of the people. But these Spiritual Assemblies have for their defender, their supporter, their helper, their inspirer, the omnipotent Lord.

Look ye not upon the present, fix your gaze upon the times to come. In the beginning, how small is the seed, yet in the end it is a mighty tree. Look ye not upon the seed, look ye upon the

tree, and its blossoms, and its leaves and its fruits. Consider the days of Christ, when none but a small band followed Him; then observe what a mighty tree that seed became, behold ye its fruitage. And now shall come to pass even greater things than these, for this is the summons of the Lord of Hosts, this is the trumpet-call of the living Lord, this is the anthem of world peace, this is the standard of righteousness and trust and understanding raised up among all the variegated peoples of the globe; this is the splendor of the Sun of Truth, this is the holiness of the spirit of God Himself. This most powerful of dispensations will encompass all the earth, and beneath its banner will all peoples gather and be sheltered together. Know then the vital import of this tiny seed that the true Husbandman hath, with the hands of His mercy, sown in the ploughed fields of the Lord, and watered with the rain of bestowals and bounties and is now nurturing in the heat and light of the Daystar of Truth.

Wherefore, O ye loved ones of God, offer up thanks unto Him, since He hath made you the object of such bounties, and the recipients of such gifts. Blessed are ye, glad tidings to you, for this abounding grace.

Summary:

The letter expresses joy upon reading reports and conveys hope for a firm and enduring Spiritual Assembly. It emphasizes the unique nature of the Spiritual Assemblies in this era, which rely on the support of the Beauty of Abhá. The analogy of a seed growing into a mighty tree is used to illustrate the potential of the current endeavors. The letter calls for a focus on the future, highlighting the unfolding of greater things. The current dispensation is described as the anthem of world peace, righteousness, trust, and understanding. The believers are urged to recognize the

significance of the small seed sown by the true Husbandman and express gratitude for the bestowed bounties.

Key Points:

1. Joyful acknowledgment of reports and hope for a firm Spiritual Assembly.
2. Unique nature of the Spiritual Assemblies in the current era, relying on the support of the Beauty of Abhá.
3. Analogy of a seed growing into a mighty tree to illustrate the potential of current endeavors.
4. Emphasis on looking towards the future and anticipating greater achievements.
5. The current dispensation is described as the anthem of world peace, righteousness, trust, and understanding.

Questions and Answers:

1. What is the unique characteristic of the Spiritual Assemblies in the current era, according to the letter?
 - The Spiritual Assemblies in this era rely on the support of the Beauty of Abhá, unlike those in previous cycles that were based on support from worldly leaders.
2. What analogy is used to illustrate the potential of current endeavors?
 - The analogy of a small seed growing into a mighty tree is used to illustrate the potential of current endeavors.
3. What does the letter emphasize regarding the believers' focus?
 - The believers are urged to focus on the future and anticipate greater achievements rather than dwelling on the present.
4. How is the current dispensation described in the letter?
 - The current dispensation is described as the anthem of world peace, righteousness, trust, and understanding, representing the splendor of the Sun of Truth.
5. What is the believers' response encouraged in the letter, considering the bestowed bounties?
 - The believers are encouraged to offer thanks unto God for being recipients of bounties and express gratitude for the abounding grace bestowed upon them.

– 41 –

O thou who art steadfast in the Covenant, and staunch! The letter which thou didst write ... hath been shown to me, and the opinions expressed therein were most commendable. It is incumbent upon the Spiritual Consultative Assembly of New York to be in complete agreement with that of Chicago, and for these two assemblies of consultation jointly to approve whatever they consider suitable for publication and distribution. Following that, let them send one copy to 'Akká, so that it may also be approved from here, after which the material will be returned to be published and circulated.

The question of coordinating and unifying the two Spiritual Assemblies, that of Chicago and of New York, is of the utmost importance, and once a Spiritual Assembly is duly formed in Washington, these two Assemblies should also establish ties of unity with that Assembly. To sum it up, it is the desire of the Lord God that the loved ones of God and the handmaids of the Merciful

in the West should come closer together in harmony and unity as day followeth day, and until this is accomplished, the work will never go forward. The Spiritual Assemblies are collectively the most effective of all instruments for establishing unity and harmony. This matter is of the utmost importance; this is the magnet that draweth down the confirmations of God. If once the beauty of the unity of the friends—this Divine Beloved—be decked in the adornments of the Abhá Kingdom, it is certain that within a very short time those countries will become the Paradise of the All-Glorious, and that out of the west the splendors of unity will cast their bright rays over all the earth.

We are striving with heart and soul, resting neither day nor night, seeking not a moment's ease, to make this world of man the mirror of the unity of God. Then how much more must the beloved of the Lord reflect that unity? And this cherished hope, this yearning wish of ours will be visibly fulfilled only on the day when the true friends of God arise to carry out the Teachings of the Abhá Beauty—may my life be a ransom for His lovers! One amongst His Teachings is this, that love and good faith must so dominate the human heart that men will regard the stranger as a familiar friend, the malefactor as one of their own, the alien even as a loved one, the enemy as a companion dear and close. Who killeth them, him will they call a bestower of life; who turneth away from them, him will they regard as turning towards them; who denieth their message, him will they consider as one acknowledging its truth. The meaning is that they must treat all humankind even as they treat their sympathizers, their fellow-believers, their loved ones and familiar friends.

Should such a torch light up the world community, ye will find that the whole earth is sending forth a fragrance, that it hath become a delightful paradise, and the face of it the image of high heaven. Then will the whole world be one native land, its diverse peoples one single kind, the nations of both east and west one household.

It is my hope that such a day will come, that such a splendor will shine forth, that such a vision will be unveiled in its full beauty.

Summary:

The letter urges unity and coordination among Spiritual Assemblies in New York, Chicago, and Washington. Emphasizes the importance of unity, harmony, and love among believers. Encourages

treating strangers, malefactors, and enemies with love and good faith. Envisions a world where diverse peoples are united, creating a global paradise.

Key Points:

1. The importance of unity among Spiritual Assemblies in New York, Chicago, and Washington.
2. The desire for closer harmony and ties of unity among believers.
3. The role of Spiritual Assemblies as effective instruments for establishing unity and harmony.
4. The goal of making the world a reflection of the unity of God.
5. Teaching of love and good faith, treating all humankind with kindness, even strangers and enemies.

Questions and Answers:

1. What does the letter emphasize regarding the Spiritual Assemblies of New York and Chicago?
- Answer: The letter urges complete agreement between the Spiritual Consultative Assemblies of New York and Chicago.
2. What is the role of Spiritual Assemblies in establishing unity?
- Answer: Spiritual Assemblies are collectively the most effective instruments for establishing unity and harmony.
3. According to the letter, what is the desired outcome of unity among believers?
- Answer: The letter envisions the creation of a paradise and the spreading of the splendors of unity worldwide.
4. What teaching does the letter highlight regarding how believers should treat others?
- Answer: Believers should treat strangers, malefactors, and enemies with love and good faith, considering them as friends and companions.
5. What is the ultimate vision expressed in the letter for the world community?
- Answer: The hope is for the whole world to become one native land, with diverse peoples as one single kind, creating a delightful paradise.

– 42 –

O ye coworkers who are supported by armies from the realm of the All-Glorious! Blessed are ye, for ye have come together in the sheltering shade of the Word of God, and have found a refuge in the cave of His Covenant; ye have brought peace to your hearts by making your home in the Abhá Paradise, and are lulled by the gentle winds that blow from their source in His loving-kindness; ye have arisen to serve the Cause of God and to spread His religion far and wide, to promote His Word and to raise high the banners of holiness throughout all those regions.

By the life of Bahá! Verily will the consummate power of the Divine Reality breathe into you the bounties of the Holy Spirit, and aid you to perform an exploit whose like the eye of creation hath never looked upon.

O ye League of the Covenant! Verily the Abhá Beauty made a promise to the beloved who are steadfast in the Covenant, that He would reinforce their strivings with the strongest of supports, and succor them with His triumphant might. Erelong shall ye see that your illumined assemblage hath left conspicuous signs and tokens in the hearts and souls of men. Hold ye fast to the hem of

God's garment, and direct all your efforts toward furthering His Covenant, and burning ever more brightly with the fire of His love, that your hearts may leap for joy in the breathings of servitude which well out from the breast of 'Abdu'l-Bahá. Rally your hearts, make firm your steps, trust in the everlasting bounties that will be shed upon you, one following another from the Kingdom of Abhá. Whensoever ye gather in that radiant assemblage, know ye that the splendors of Bahá are shining over you. It behooveth you to seek agreement and to be united; it behooveth you to be in close communion one with the other, at one both in body and soul, till ye match the Pleiades or a string of lustrous pearls. Thus will ye be solidly established; thus will your words prevail, your star shine out, and your hearts be comforted....

Whenever ye enter the council-chamber, recite this prayer with a heart throbbing with the love of God and a tongue purified from all but His remembrance, that the All-Powerful may graciously aid you to achieve supreme victory:

O God, my God! We are servants of Thine that have turned with devotion to Thy Holy Face, that have detached ourselves from all besides Thee in this glorious Day. We have gathered in this Spiritual Assembly, united in our views and thoughts, with our purposes harmonized to exalt Thy Word amidst mankind. O Lord, our God! Make us the signs of Thy Divine Guidance, the Standards of Thine exalted Faith amongst men, servants to Thy mighty Covenant, O Thou our Lord Most High, manifestations of Thy Divine Unity in Thine Abhá Kingdom, and resplendent stars shining upon all regions. Lord! Aid us to become seas surging with the billows of Thy wondrous Grace, streams flowing from Thine all-glorious Heights, goodly fruits upon the Tree of Thy heavenly Cause, trees waving through the breezes of Thy Bounty in Thy celestial Vineyard. O God! Make our souls dependent upon the Verses of Thy Divine Unity, our hearts cheered with the outpourings of Thy Grace, that we may unite even as the waves of one sea and become merged together as the rays of Thine effulgent Light; that our thoughts, our views, our feelings may become as one reality, manifesting the spirit of union throughout the world. Thou art the Gracious, the Bountiful, the Bestower, the Almighty, the Merciful, the Compassionate.

Summary:

The passage addresses a league of covenant-keepers who have gathered to serve the Cause of God. It promises divine support and encourages unity among them. The believers are urged to hold onto

God's covenant, strive in His path, and anticipate the bounties of the Holy Spirit. A prayer is provided for their meetings, seeking divine guidance and unity among the members.

Key Points:

1. Covenant-keeping believers are praised for their dedication to the Cause of God.
2. Divine support and the aid of the Holy Spirit are promised to those steadfast in the Covenant.
3. The believers are encouraged to be united, matching the Pleiades or lustrous pearls.
4. The passage emphasizes the importance of harmony, agreement, and communion among the covenant-keeping assembly.
5. A prayer is provided for the believers, seeking divine guidance, unity, and the manifestation of God's grace.

Questions and Answers:

1. What is the promise made to the covenant-keeping believers regarding divine support?
- Answer: The passage promises that the consummate power of the Divine Reality will breathe into them the bounties of the Holy Spirit.
2. What is the counsel given to the League of the Covenant regarding their efforts?
- Answer: The believers are advised to hold onto God's covenant, strive in His path, and anticipate the bounties of the Holy Spirit.
3. What imagery is used to emphasize the unity desired among the covenant-keeping believers?
- Answer: The believers are encouraged to be united, matching the Pleiades or a string of lustrous pearls.
4. What is the significance of the prayer provided for the believers?
- Answer: The prayer seeks divine guidance, unity, and the manifestation of God's grace during their meetings.
5. How does the passage envision the believers becoming "merged together as the rays of Thine effulgent Light"?
- Answer: The passage envisions the believers becoming one reality, manifesting the spirit of union throughout the world, as they hold onto the covenant and seek divine guidance.

– 43 –

The prime requisites for them that take counsel together are purity of motive, radiance of spirit, detachment from all else save God, attraction to His Divine Fragrances, humility and lowliness amongst His loved ones, patience and long-suffering in difficulties and servitude to His exalted Threshold. Should they be graciously aided to acquire these attributes, victory from the unseen Kingdom of Bahá shall be vouchsafed to them.

Summary:

The passage highlights essential qualities for those engaged in consultation: purity of motive, radiance of spirit, detachment from everything but God, attraction to divine fragrances, humility,

patience, and servitude to the divine threshold. Acquiring these attributes is seen as the key to receiving victory from the unseen Kingdom of Bahá.

Key Points:

1. **Purity of Motive:** Emphasizes the importance of sincere and pure intentions when engaging in consultation.
2. **Radiance of Spirit:** Calls for a spirit filled with light and positivity during the deliberation process.
3. **Detachment from All Else Save God:** Advises individuals to be free from worldly attachments and focus solely on God.
4. **Attraction to Divine Fragrances:** Encourages a spiritual inclination towards the divine qualities and virtues.
5. **Humility and Lowliness:** Stresses the significance of humility and modesty, especially among the loved ones of God.
6. **Patience and Long-suffering:** Highlights the need for endurance and patience in the face of difficulties.
7. **Servitude to His Exalted Threshold:** Encourages a sense of humble service and devotion to the divine presence of God.

Questions and Answers:

1. What are the prime requisites for those engaged in counsel according to the passage?
- Answer: Purity of motive, radiance of spirit, detachment from all else save God, attraction to divine fragrances, humility, patience, and servitude to His exalted Threshold.
2. What is the promised outcome if individuals acquire the mentioned attributes during consultation?
- Answer: The passage promises that if individuals acquire these attributes, victory from the unseen Kingdom of Bahá shall be vouchsafed to them.
3. Why is detachment emphasized in the context of consultation?
- Answer: Detachment is emphasized to encourage individuals to focus solely on God and avoid worldly distractions during the consultation process.
4. What role does humility play in the recommended qualities for those engaged in consultation?
- Answer: Humility is stressed as a significant quality, especially among the loved ones of God, fostering a conducive environment for consultation.
5. How does the passage view difficulties and challenges in the context of consultation?
- Answer: The passage emphasizes the need for patience and long-suffering in difficulties, suggesting that facing challenges with endurance is part of the process.

The members thereof¹ must take counsel together in such wise that no occasion for ill-feeling or discord may arise. This can be attained when every member expresseth with absolute freedom his own opinion and setteth forth his argument. Should anyone oppose, he must on no account feel hurt for not until matters are fully discussed can the right way be revealed. The shining spark of

truth cometh forth only after the clash of differing opinions. If after discussion, a decision be carried unanimously well and good; but if, the Lord forbid, differences of opinion should arise, a majority of voices must prevail.

Summary:

The passage emphasizes the importance of harmonious consultation among members. It suggests that open expression of opinions and arguments is crucial, and differences should not lead to ill-

feelings. The spark of truth emerges through the clash of differing opinions, and decisions are reached either unanimously or by majority vote.

Key Points:

1. **Harmonious Consultation:** Stresses the need for members to counsel in a way that prevents ill-feeling or discord.
2. **Freedom of Expression:** Encourages members to express their opinions freely and present their arguments.
3. **No Hurt Feelings:** Advises against feeling hurt if one's opinion faces opposition, as the clash of opinions is integral to revealing the right way.
4. **Truth through Differing Opinions:** Asserts that the shining spark of truth emerges through the clash of differing opinions during discussions.
5. **Decision-Making:** States that decisions can be reached either unanimously or, in the case of differences, by a majority vote.

Questions and Answers:

1. What is the primary objective of members when taking counsel together according to the passage?
- Answer: The primary objective is to counsel in a way that prevents ill-feeling or discord among members.
2. How does the passage view the clash of differing opinions during consultation?
- Answer: The passage sees the clash of differing opinions as essential, as the shining spark of truth emerges through this process.
3. What is the suggested attitude if someone opposes an opinion during consultation?
- Answer: If someone opposes an opinion, they should not feel hurt, as the right way is revealed through the full discussion of differing opinions.
4. How does the passage propose reaching decisions during consultation?
- Answer: Decisions can be reached either unanimously or, if differences arise, by a majority vote.
5. Why does the passage encourage the absolute freedom of expressing opinions during consultation?
- Answer: Absolute freedom of expression is encouraged because the clash of differing opinions is necessary for revealing the shining spark of truth and finding the right way.

– 45 –

The first condition is absolute love and harmony amongst the members of the assembly. They must be wholly free from estrangement and must manifest in themselves the Unity of God, for they are the waves of one sea, the drops of one river, the stars of one heaven, the rays of one sun, the trees of one orchard, the flowers of one garden. Should harmony of thought and absolute unity be nonexistent, that gathering shall be dispersed and that assembly be brought to naught. The second condition is that the members of the assembly should unitedly elect a chairman and lay down guidelines and bylaws for their meetings and discussions. The chairman should have charge of such rules and regulations and protect and enforce them; the other members should be submissive,

and refrain from conversing on superfluous and extraneous matters. They must, when coming together, turn their faces to the Kingdom on high and ask aid from the Realm of Glory. They must then proceed with the utmost devotion, courtesy, dignity, care and moderation to express their views. They must in every matter search out the truth and not insist upon their own opinion, for stubbornness and persistence in one's views will lead ultimately to discord and wrangling and the truth will remain hidden. The honored members must with all freedom express their own thoughts, and it is in no wise permissible for one to belittle the thought of another, nay, he must with moderation set forth the truth, and should differences of opinion arise a majority of voices must prevail, and all must obey and submit to the majority. It is again not permitted that any one of the honored members object to or censure, whether in or out of the meeting, any decision arrived at previously, though that decision be not right, for such criticism would prevent any decision from being enforced. In short, whatsoever thing is arranged in harmony and with love and purity of motive, its result is light, and should the least trace of estrangement prevail the result shall be darkness upon darkness.... If this be so regarded, that assembly shall be of God, but otherwise it shall lead to coolness and alienation that proceed from the Evil One.... Should they endeavor to fulfill these conditions the Grace of the Holy Spirit shall be vouchsafed unto them, and that assembly shall become the center of the Divine blessings, the hosts of Divine confirmation shall come to their aid, and they shall day by day receive a new effusion of Spirit.

Summary:

The passage outlines conditions for a harmonious and effective assembly. The first condition is absolute love and unity among members, emphasizing their interconnectedness. The second condition involves the election of a chairman, establishment of guidelines, and the importance of devotion, courtesy, and moderation during discussions. Members are urged to seek the truth, avoid

stubbornness, and submit to majority decisions. The passage emphasizes that unity, love, and purity of motive lead to divine blessings, while estrangement and discord are discouraged.

Key Points:

1. **Love and Harmony:** Emphasizes absolute love and harmony among assembly members, viewing them as interconnected waves, drops, stars, rays, trees, and flowers.
2. **Unity of Thought:** Stresses the necessity of unity of thought and the manifestation of the Unity of God within the assembly.
3. **Election of Chairman:** Recommends the united election of a chairman responsible for enforcing guidelines and regulations.
4. **Guidelines and Bylaws:** Encourages the establishment of guidelines and bylaws for meetings, ensuring order and focus.
5. **Devotion and Moderation:** Advises members to turn to the Kingdom on high, express views with devotion, courtesy, dignity, care, and moderation.
6. **Search for Truth:** Urges the assembly to search for the truth in every matter, avoiding insistence on personal opinions.
7. **Majority Decision:** Advocates that a majority of voices should prevail in case of differences, and all members must submit to the majority.
8. **Restriction on Criticism:** Prohibits members from criticizing decisions outside the meeting, emphasizing unity and avoiding hindrance to decision enforcement.
9. **Divine Blessings:** Promises the Grace of the Holy Spirit, becoming a center of divine blessings through adherence to the outlined conditions.

Questions and Answers:

1. What is the first condition outlined for an effective assembly according to the passage?
- Answer: The first condition is absolute love and harmony among the members of the assembly, manifesting the Unity of God.
2. Why is the election of a chairman important for the assembly?
- Answer: The chairman is responsible for enforcing guidelines and regulations, ensuring order during meetings.
3. What is emphasized in the passage regarding the expression of views during assembly discussions?
- Answer: Members are urged to express their views with utmost devotion, courtesy, dignity, care, and moderation.
4. How does the passage view stubbornness and persistence in one's views during discussions?
- Answer: Stubbornness and persistence in one's views are discouraged, as they may lead to discord and prevent the revelation of truth.
5. What is the promised outcome if the assembly fulfills the outlined conditions?
- Answer: The assembly shall receive the Grace of the Holy Spirit, becoming a center of divine blessings with new effusions of Spirit day by day.

O ye who are firm in the Covenant! ‘Abdu’l-Bahá is constantly engaged in ideal communication with any Spiritual Assembly which is instituted through the divine bounty, and the members of which, in the utmost devotion, turn to the divine Kingdom and are firm in the Covenant. To them he is wholeheartedly attached and with them he is linked by everlasting ties. Thus correspondence with that gathering is sincere, constant and uninterrupted.

At every instant, I beg for you assistance, bounty, and a fresh favor and blessing, so that the confirmations of Bahá’u’lláh may, like unto the sea, be constantly surging, the lights of the Sun of Truth may shine upon you all and that ye may be confirmed in service, may become the manifestations of bounty and that each one of you may, at dawn, turn unto the Holy Land and may experience spiritual emotions with all intensity.

Summary:

The passage addresses those firm in the Covenant, highlighting ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s constant communication with devoted Spiritual Assemblies. It emphasizes the sincere and uninterrupted nature of this correspondence. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá seeks assistance, bounty, and blessings for the

believers, envisioning the constant surge of Bahá'u'lláh's confirmations, the shining of the Sun of Truth, and the believers being confirmed in service as manifestations of divine bounty.

Key Points:

1. **Communication with Spiritual Assemblies:** 'Abdu'l-Bahá engages in ideal communication with Spiritual Assemblies devoted to the divine Kingdom and firm in the Covenant.
2. **Everlasting Ties:** 'Abdu'l-Bahá is wholeheartedly attached to and linked by everlasting ties with such Spiritual Assemblies.
3. **Sincere and Uninterrupted Correspondence:** Correspondence with these gatherings is characterized by sincerity, constancy, and uninterrupted communication.
4. **Seeking Assistance and Bounty:** 'Abdu'l-Bahá constantly seeks assistance, bounty, and fresh favors for the believers.
5. **Desired Confirmations:** Envisions the constant surge of Bahá'u'lláh's confirmations, the shining of the Sun of Truth, and believers being confirmed in service as manifestations of divine bounty.

Questions and Answers:

1. What is the nature of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's communication with devoted Spiritual Assemblies?
- Answer: 'Abdu'l-Bahá is constantly engaged in ideal communication with Spiritual Assemblies devoted to the divine Kingdom and firm in the Covenant.
2. How does 'Abdu'l-Bahá describe his attachment to these Spiritual Assemblies?
- Answer: 'Abdu'l-Bahá is wholeheartedly attached to and linked by everlasting ties with Spiritual Assemblies firm in the Covenant.
3. What qualities characterize the correspondence with the mentioned gatherings?
- Answer: Correspondence with these gatherings is characterized by sincerity, constancy, and uninterrupted communication.
4. What does 'Abdu'l-Bahá constantly seek for the believers?
- Answer: 'Abdu'l-Bahá constantly seeks assistance, bounty, and fresh favors for the believers.
5. What is envisioned for the believers in the passage?
- Answer: The passage envisions the constant surge of Bahá'u'lláh's confirmations, the shining of the Sun of Truth, and believers being confirmed in service as manifestations of divine bounty.

– 47 –

O ye true friends! Your letter hath been received and it brought great joy. God be praised, ye had made ready an entertainment and established the feast which is to be held every nineteen days. Whatsoever gathering is arranged with the utmost love, and where those who attend are turning their faces toward the Kingdom of God, and where the discourse is of the Teachings of God, and the effect of which is to cause those present to advance—that gathering is the Lord's, and that festive table hath come down from heaven.

It is my hope that this feast will be given on one day out of every nineteen, for it bringeth you closer together; it is the very wellspring of unity and loving-kindness.

Ye observe to what a degree the world is in continual turmoil and conflict, and to what a pass its nations have now come. Perchance will the lovers of God succeed in upraising the banner of human unity, so that the one-colored tabernacle of the Kingdom of Heaven will cast its sheltering shadow over all the earth; that misunderstandings among the world's peoples will vanish away; that all nations will mingle one with another, dealing with one another even as the lover with his beloved.

It is your duty to be exceedingly kind to every human being, and to wish him well; to work for the upliftment of society; to blow the breath of life into the dead; to act in accordance with the instructions of Bahá'u'lláh and walk His path—until ye change the world of man into the world of God.

Summary:

The passage expresses joy for receiving a letter about an established feast held every nineteen days. It emphasizes that gatherings centered on love, facing the Kingdom of God, and discussing His Teachings are the Lord's. The hope is for the feast to occur regularly as it fosters unity and loving-kindness. The turmoil in the world is acknowledged, and the believers are encouraged to strive for human unity, envisioning a world where nations unite and interact harmoniously. The

duty of the believers is emphasized, urging kindness, goodwill, societal upliftment, and the transformative adherence to Bahá'u'lláh's instructions.

Key Points:

1. **Joy for the Feast:** Expresses joy for the letter about the established feast held every nineteen days.
2. **Characteristics of a Divine Gathering:** Describes gatherings focused on love, facing the Kingdom of God, and discussing His Teachings as the Lord's, likening the festive table to coming down from heaven.
3. **Frequency of the Feast:** Encourages the feast to be held regularly, every nineteen days, as it brings the community closer together and is a wellspring of unity and loving-kindness.
4. **Global Turmoil:** Acknowledges the world's continuous turmoil and conflicts among nations.
5. **Vision of Human Unity:** Envisions the lovers of God raising the banner of human unity, eliminating misunderstandings among nations, and fostering harmonious interactions.
6. **Duty of the Believers:** Emphasizes the believers' duty to be exceedingly kind, wish well to every human being, work for societal upliftment, and follow Bahá'u'lláh's instructions to transform the world into the world of God.

Questions and Answers:

1. What brings joy according to the passage?
- Answer: The joy is expressed for receiving a letter about the establishment of a feast held every nineteen days.
2. What is considered the Lord's gathering, and what is its impact?
- Answer: Gatherings focused on love, facing the Kingdom of God, and discussing His Teachings are considered the Lord's, and their impact is likened to a festive table coming down from heaven.
3. Why does the passage encourage the feast to be held regularly?
- Answer: The feast is encouraged to be held regularly, every nineteen days, as it brings the community closer together and serves as a wellspring of unity and loving-kindness.
4. What vision does the passage have for the lovers of God regarding human unity?
- Answer: The lovers of God are envisioned to raise the banner of human unity, eliminating misunderstandings among nations and fostering harmonious interactions.
5. What duty is emphasized for the believers, according to the passage?
- Answer: Believers are urged to be exceedingly kind, wish well to every human being, work for societal upliftment, and follow Bahá'u'lláh's instructions to transform the world into the world of God.

O ye loyal servants of the Ancient Beauty! In every cycle and dispensation, the feast hath been favored and loved, and the spreading of a table for the lovers of God hath been considered a praiseworthy act. This is especially the case today, in this dispensation beyond compare, this most generous of ages, when it is highly acclaimed, for it is truly accounted among such gatherings as

are held to worship and glorify God. Here the holy verses, the heavenly odes and laudations are intoned, and the heart is quickened, and carried away from itself.

The primary intent is to kindle these stirrings of the spirit, but at the same time it follows quite naturally that those present should partake of food, so that the world of the body may mirror the spirit's world, and flesh take on the qualities of soul; and just as the spiritual delights are here in profusion, so too the material delights.

Happy are ye to be observing this rule with all its mystic meanings, thus keeping the friends of God alert and heedful, and bringing them peace of mind, and joy.

Summary:

The passage praises the significance of the feast in every cycle and dispensation, particularly in the current age. The spreading of a table for lovers of God is considered praiseworthy, especially in this generous age. The feast is a means to worship and glorify God, where holy verses are recited, and the heart is uplifted. The primary intent is to kindle spiritual stirrings, but the sharing

of food is encouraged to connect the material and spiritual worlds. Observing this practice brings joy, peace of mind, and keeps the friends of God alert.

Key Points:

1. **Favor of the Feast:** Throughout cycles and dispensations, the feast has been favored and loved.
2. **Praiseworthy Act:** Spreading a table for lovers of God is considered a praiseworthy act, especially in the current dispensation.
3. **Worship and Glorification:** The feast is a means to worship and glorify God, with the recitation of holy verses and heavenly odes.
4. **Connection of Material and Spiritual:** While the primary intent is spiritual, the sharing of food connects the material and spiritual worlds, allowing the body to mirror the spirit's world.
5. **Alertness and Peace of Mind:** Observing the feast keeps the friends of God alert, brings them peace of mind, and joy.

Questions and Answers:

1. What is the significance of the feast in the current dispensation according to the passage?
- Answer: The feast is highly acclaimed in the current dispensation, considered among gatherings held to worship and glorify God.
2. What is the primary intent of the feast according to the passage?
- Answer: The primary intent is to kindle stirrings of the spirit, uplifting the heart, and glorifying God.
3. Why is the sharing of food encouraged during the feast?
- Answer: While the primary intent is spiritual, sharing food is encouraged to connect the material and spiritual worlds, allowing the body to mirror the spirit's world.
4. What benefits are associated with observing the feast according to the passage?
- Answer: Observing the feast brings joy, keeps the friends of God alert, and brings them peace of mind.
5. How is the feast described in relation to the spiritual and material delights?
- Answer: The spiritual delights are in profusion during the feast, and the material delights are also present, connecting the material and spiritual aspects of life.

– 49 –

Thy letter hath been received. Thou didst write of the Nineteen Day festivity, and this rejoiced my heart. These gatherings cause the divine table to descend from heaven, and draw down the confirmations of the All-Merciful. My hope is that the breathings of the Holy Spirit will be wafted over them, and that each one present shall, in great assemblies, with an eloquent tongue and a heart flooded with the love of God, set himself to acclaiming the rise of the Sun of Truth, the dawn of the Daystar that lighteth all the world.

Summary:

The passage expresses joy upon receiving a letter about the Nineteen Day festivity. It highlights that these gatherings cause the divine table to descend from heaven and attract the confirmations

of the All-Merciful. The hope is that the breathings of the Holy Spirit will inspire eloquent expressions of love for God, acclaiming the rise of the Sun of Truth in large assemblies.

Key Points:

1. **Joyful Reception of Letter:** The recipient expresses joy upon receiving a letter about the Nineteen Day festivity.
2. **Divine Table Descending:** Emphasizes that these gatherings cause the divine table to descend from heaven.
3. **Confirmations of the All-Merciful:** These gatherings attract the confirmations of the All-Merciful.
4. **Hope for Holy Spirit's Breathings:** Expresses hope that the breathings of the Holy Spirit will be wafted over these gatherings.
5. **Eloquent Acclaiming of the Sun of Truth:** Encourages participants to, with eloquence and love for God, acclaim the rise of the Sun of Truth in large assemblies.

Questions and Answers:

1. What is the cause of joy mentioned in the passage?
- Answer: The joy is expressed upon receiving a letter about the Nineteen Day festivity.
2. What is emphasized regarding the gatherings mentioned in the passage?
- Answer: These gatherings cause the divine table to descend from heaven and attract the confirmations of the All-Merciful.
3. What is the expressed hope for these gatherings?
- Answer: The hope is that the breathings of the Holy Spirit will be wafted over these gatherings.
4. How are participants encouraged to express their love for God in these gatherings?
- Answer: Participants are encouraged to, with an eloquent tongue and a heart flooded with the love of God, acclaim the rise of the Sun of Truth.
5. What is the envisioned setting for acclaiming the rise of the Sun of Truth according to the passage?
- Answer: Participants are encouraged to do so in great assemblies, expressing their love for God in large gatherings.

– 50 –

Thou hast asked as to the Feast in every Bahá'í month. This feast is held to foster comradeship and love, to call God to mind and supplicate Him with contrite hearts, and to encourage benevolent pursuits.

That is, the friends should there dwell upon God and glorify Him, read the prayers and holy verses, and treat one another with the utmost affection and love.

Summary:

The passage addresses the inquiry about the Bahá'í Feast held every Bahá'í month. It explains that the feast is intended to foster comradeship, love, remembrance of God, supplication with contrite

hearts, and encouragement of benevolent pursuits. During the feast, friends are to focus on God, glorify Him, read prayers and holy verses, and treat one another with the utmost affection and love.

Key Points:

1. **Purpose of the Feast:** The Bahá'í Feast is held to foster comradeship, love, remembrance of God, supplication with contrite hearts, and encouragement of benevolent pursuits.
2. **Dwell Upon God:** Friends are encouraged to dwell upon God during the feast.
3. **Glorification of God:** Participants should glorify God and read prayers and holy verses during the feast.
4. **Affection and Love:** The utmost affection and love should be expressed in the interactions among friends during the feast.

Questions and Answers:

1. What is the main purpose of the Bahá'í Feast mentioned in the passage?
- Answer: The Bahá'í Feast is held to foster comradeship, love, remembrance of God, supplication with contrite hearts, and encouragement of benevolent pursuits.
2. What specific activities are encouraged during the feast?
- Answer: Friends are encouraged to dwell upon God, glorify Him, read prayers and holy verses, and treat one another with the utmost affection and love.
3. Why is the remembrance of God emphasized during the feast?
- Answer: The remembrance of God is emphasized to infuse the gathering with spiritual significance and purpose.
4. How should participants treat one another during the feast?
- Answer: Participants should treat one another with the utmost affection and love.
5. What is the intended atmosphere during the Bahá'í Feast according to the passage?
- Answer: The intended atmosphere is one where friends focus on God, glorify Him, engage in prayer and holy readings, and express affection and love toward one another.

As to the Nineteen Day Feast, it rejoiceth mind and heart. If this feast be held in the proper fashion, the friends will, once in nineteen days, find themselves spiritually restored, and endued with a power that is not of this world.

Summary:

The passage expresses joy regarding the Nineteen Day Feast, highlighting its potential to bring spiritual restoration and endow participants with a power beyond this world if held in the proper fashion.

Key Points:

1. **Joyful Perspective:** The Nineteen Day Feast is viewed with joy for its spiritual significance.
2. **Spiritual Restoration:** Properly held, the feast has the capacity to spiritually restore participants.
3. **Power Beyond This World:** Participants may be endowed with a power that transcends worldly influences.

Questions and Answers:

1. What is the emotional response to the Nineteen Day Feast in the passage?
- Answer: The passage expresses joy regarding the Nineteen Day Feast.
2. What is the potential outcome of the Nineteen Day Feast when held in the proper fashion?
- Answer: Properly held, the feast can lead to spiritual restoration for the participants.
3. How often does the Nineteen Day Feast occur according to the passage?
- Answer: The Nineteen Day Feast occurs once in nineteen days.
4. What does the passage suggest participants may be endowed with during the Nineteen Day Feast?
- Answer: Participants may be endowed with a power that is not of this world.
5. What is the spiritual significance associated with the Nineteen Day Feast in the passage?
- Answer: The Nineteen Day Feast is viewed as a source of spiritual restoration and a conduit for a power beyond this world if held in the proper fashion.

– 52 –

O servant of the One true God! The Lord be praised, the loved ones of God are found in every land, and are, one and all, neath the shadow of the Tree of Life and under the protection of His good providence. His care and loving-kindness surge even as the eternal billows of the sea, and His blessings are continually showered from His eternal Kingdom.

Ours should be the prayer that His blessings may be vouchsafed in still greater abundance, and ours to hold fast to such means as shall ensure a fuller outpouring of His grace and a greater measure of His divine assistance.

One of the greatest of these means is the spirit of true fellowship and loving communion amongst the friends. Remember the saying: “Of all pilgrimages the greatest is to relieve the sorrow-laden heart.”

Summary:

The passage acknowledges the presence of the loved ones of God in every land, under the protection of His providence. It encourages prayers for an increased abundance of blessings and

emphasizes the importance of true fellowship and loving communion among the friends. The quote "Of all pilgrimages, the greatest is to relieve the sorrow-laden heart" is referenced, highlighting the significance of alleviating the sorrows of others.

Key Points:

1. **Presence of Loved Ones:** Loved ones of God are found globally, under the protection of His providence.
2. **Abundance of Blessings:** Prayer is encouraged for an increased abundance of divine blessings.
3. **Means for Divine Assistance:** Holding fast to means that ensure a fuller outpouring of divine grace and a greater measure of divine assistance is emphasized.
4. **Importance of Fellowship:** True fellowship and loving communion among the friends are highlighted as significant means.
5. **Quotation on Pilgrimages:** A quote is referenced, stating, "Of all pilgrimages the greatest is to relieve the sorrow-laden heart."

Questions and Answers:

1. Where are the loved ones of God found according to the passage?
- Answer: The loved ones of God are found in every land, under the protection of His providence.
2. What is encouraged through prayer in the passage?
- Answer: Prayer is encouraged for an increased abundance of divine blessings.
3. What is emphasized as one of the greatest means for divine assistance?
- Answer: True fellowship and loving communion among the friends are emphasized as one of the greatest means for divine assistance.
4. What is the significance of holding fast to certain means according to the passage?
- Answer: Holding fast to means ensures a fuller outpouring of divine grace and a greater measure of divine assistance.
5. What does the quoted saying highlight regarding pilgrimages?
- Answer: The quoted saying highlights that of all pilgrimages, the greatest is to relieve the sorrow-laden heart, emphasizing the significance of alleviating the sorrows of others.

– 53 –

Verily, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá inhalet the fragrance of the love of God from every meeting place where the Word of God is uttered and proofs and arguments set forth that shed their rays across the world, and where they recount the tribulations of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá at the evil hands of those who have violated the Covenant of God.

O handmaid of the Lord! Speak thou no word of politics; thy task concerneth the life of the soul, for this verily leadeth to man’s joy in the world of God. Except to speak well of them, make thou no mention of the earth’s kings, and the worldly governments thereof. Rather, confine thine utterance to spreading the blissful tidings of the Kingdom of God, and demonstrating the influence of the Word of God, and the holiness of the Cause of God. Tell thou of abiding joy and spiritual delights, and godlike qualities, and of how the Sun of Truth hath risen above the earth’s horizons: tell of the blowing of the spirit of life into the body of the world.

Summary:

The passage conveys ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s appreciation for gatherings where the Word of God is proclaimed, accompanied by proofs and arguments. It emphasizes the importance of focusing on the spiritual realm, avoiding political discussions, and steering clear of criticism toward worldly authorities. The central task is seen as nurturing the soul, spreading the joyful tidings of the Kingdom of God, and highlighting the transformative influence of the Word of God.

Key Points:

1. **‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s Appreciation:** ‘Abdu’l-Bahá appreciates gatherings where the Word of God is proclaimed and proofs are presented, shedding their rays across the world.
2. **Tribulations of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá:** Mention is made of recounting the tribulations faced by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá due to the violation of the Covenant of God.
3. **Avoidance of Politics:** The passage advises against speaking about politics and worldly governments, focusing instead on the life of the soul.
4. **Emphasis on Spiritual Matters:** The central task is directed towards nurturing the soul, spreading joyous tidings of the Kingdom of God, and demonstrating the transformative influence of the Word of God.
5. **Positive Narrative:** The passage encourages speaking well of others and presenting a narrative of abiding joy, spiritual delights, godlike qualities, and the rising of the Sun of Truth.

Questions and Answers:

1. What does ‘Abdu’l-Bahá appreciate in gatherings mentioned in the passage?
- Answer: ‘Abdu’l-Bahá appreciates gatherings where the Word of God is proclaimed, and proofs and arguments are presented.
2. What does the passage advise concerning discussions about politics and worldly governments?
- Answer: The passage advises against speaking about politics and worldly governments, redirecting the focus towards the life of the soul.
3. What is highlighted as the central task according to the passage?
- Answer: The central task is to concern oneself with the life of the soul, leading to joy in the world of God.
4. What narrative is encouraged in spreading the blissful tidings of the Kingdom of God?
- Answer: The narrative encouraged is one of abiding joy, spiritual delights, godlike qualities, and the rising of the Sun of Truth.
5. What aspect of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s experiences is mentioned in the passage?
- Answer: The passage mentions recounting the tribulations faced by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá at the hands of those who violated the Covenant of God.

Ye have written as to the meetings of the friends, and how filled they are with peace and joy. Of course this is so; for wherever the spiritually minded are gathered together, there in His beauty

reigneth Bahá'u'lláh. Thus it is certain that such reunions will yield boundless happiness and peace.

Today it behooveth one and all to forgo the mention of all else, and to disregard all things. Let their speaking, let their inner state be summed up thus: "Keep all my words of prayer and praise confined to one refrain; make all my life but servitude to Thee." That is, let them concentrate all their thoughts, all their words, on teaching the Cause of God and spreading the Faith of God, and inspiring all to characterize themselves with the characteristics of God; on loving mankind; on being pure and holy in all things, and spotless in their public and private life; on being upright and detached, and fervent, and afire. All is to be yielded up, save only the remembrance of God; all is to be dispraised, except His praise. Today, to this melody of the Company on high, the world will leap and dance: "Glory be to my Lord, the All-Glorious!" But know ye this: save for this song of God, no song will stir the world, and save for this nightingale-cry of truth from the Garden of God, no melody will lure away the heart. "Whence cometh this Singer Who speaketh the Beloved's name?"

Summary:

The passage emphasizes the uplifting and joyous atmosphere when spiritually minded individuals gather, attributing it to the presence of Bahá'u'lláh. It encourages believers to focus on selfless service, teaching the Cause of God, spreading the Faith, and embodying divine virtues. The central

theme is the remembrance of God and dedication to a life characterized by love, purity, uprightness, and detachment.

Key points:

1. Meetings of spiritually minded friends bring peace and joy due to the presence of Bahá'u'lláh.
2. Emphasis on forsaking worldly concerns and concentrating on a life devoted to God's service.
3. Encouragement to focus on teaching the Cause of God and embodying divine virtues in interactions.
4. The importance of being pure, holy, upright, detached, fervent, and afire in both public and private life.
5. The significance of praising God and the belief that this devotion will stir the world.

Questions and Answers:

1. What is the key factor contributing to the joy in gatherings of spiritually minded friends?

Answer: The presence of Bahá'u'lláh.

2. What is the central theme believers are encouraged to focus on in their thoughts and words?

Answer: The remembrance of God and a life dedicated to His service.

3. What aspects of life should believers concentrate on according to the passage?

Answer: Teaching the Cause of God, spreading the Faith, and embodying divine virtues.

4. Name some characteristics that believers are urged to adopt in both public and private life.

Answer: Love for mankind, purity, uprightness, detachment, fervency, and being afire.

5. According to the passage, what is the pivotal element that can stir the world and captivate the heart?

Answer: The song of God and the nightingale-cry of truth from the Garden of God, praising and remembering the Beloved.

– 55 –

It befitteth the friends to hold a gathering, a meeting, where they shall glorify God and fix their hearts upon Him, and read and recite the Holy Writings of the Blessed Beauty—may my soul be the ransom of His lovers! The lights of the All-Glorious Realm, the rays of the Supreme Horizon, will be cast upon such bright assemblages, for these are none other than the *Mashriqu'l-Adhkárs*, the Dawning-Points of God's Remembrance, which must, at the direction of the Most Exalted Pen, be established in every hamlet and city... These spiritual gatherings must be held with the utmost purity and consecration, so that from the site itself, and its earth and the air about it, one will inhale the fragrant breathings of the Holy Spirit.

Summary:

The passage encourages believers to gather for meetings dedicated to glorifying God, fixing their hearts upon Him, and reading the Holy Writings of the Blessed Beauty. These gatherings, described as *Mashriqu'l-Adhkárs* or Dawning-Points of God's Remembrance, are deemed essential and should be established in every hamlet and city. The emphasis is on holding these

spiritual gatherings with purity and consecration to allow the inhalation of the Holy Spirit's fragrant breathings.

Key points:

1. The friends are urged to hold gatherings dedicated to glorifying God and reading Holy Writings.
2. These gatherings are referred to as Mashriqu'l-Adhkárs or Dawning-Points of God's Remembrance.
3. The lights of the All-Glorious Realm and the rays of the Supreme Horizon will shine upon such gatherings.
4. The establishment of these spiritual gatherings is considered essential, directed by the Most Exalted Pen.
5. Emphasis on holding gatherings with utmost purity and consecration to inhale the Holy Spirit's fragrant breathings.

Questions and Answers:

1. What is the main purpose of the gatherings encouraged in the passage?

Answer: Glorifying God, fixing hearts upon Him, and reading the Holy Writings.

2. What are these gatherings referred to as in the passage?

Answer: Mashriqu'l-Adhkárs or Dawning-Points of God's Remembrance.

3. What is expected to occur in such gatherings according to the passage?

Answer: The lights of the All-Glorious Realm and the rays of the Supreme Horizon will be cast upon them.

4. According to the passage, who directs the establishment of these spiritual gatherings?

Answer: The Most Exalted Pen.

5. How should these gatherings be held to ensure their spiritual essence?

Answer: With the utmost purity and consecration, allowing the inhalation of the fragrant breathings of the Holy Spirit.

Whensoever a company of people shall gather in a meeting place, shall engage in glorifying God, and shall speak with one another of the mysteries of God, beyond any doubt the breathings of the Holy Spirit will blow gently over them, and each shall receive a share thereof.

Summary:

The passage highlights that when a group of people gathers in a meeting place to glorify God and discuss the mysteries of God, the gentle breathings of the Holy Spirit will undoubtedly be present, and each individual will receive a share of this divine influence.

Key points:

1. Gathering in a meeting place is emphasized.
2. The purpose of the gathering is to glorify God.
3. Participants are encouraged to discuss the mysteries of God with one another.
4. The assurance is given that the breathings of the Holy Spirit will be present.
5. Each individual in the gathering will receive a share of the Holy Spirit's influence.

Questions and Answers:

1. What is the primary focus when a group of people gathers in the passage?

Answer: Glorifying God.

2. Besides glorifying God, what are participants encouraged to discuss in the gathering?

Answer: The mysteries of God.

3. What is assured to be present when people engage in glorifying God and discussing divine mysteries?

Answer: The breathings of the Holy Spirit.

4. What is the outcome for each individual in the gathering according to the passage?

Answer: Each will receive a share of the Holy Spirit's influence.

5. What is the passage's stance on the certainty of the Holy Spirit's presence in such gatherings?

Answer: It states that beyond any doubt, the breathings of the Holy Spirit will be present.

– 57 –

We hear that thou hast in mind to embellish thy house from time to time with a meeting of Bahá'ís, where some among them will engage in glorifying the All-Glorious Lord... Know that shouldst thou bring this about, that house of earth will become a house of heaven, and that fabric of stone a congress of the spirit.

Summary:

The passage encourages the idea of hosting gatherings of Bahá'ís in one's house, emphasizing that engaging in the glorification of the All-Glorious Lord during these meetings can transform the earthly house into a heavenly abode and the stone structure into a spiritual congress.

Key points:

1. The encouragement to host gatherings of Bahá'ís in one's house is expressed.
2. The suggested activity during these gatherings is the glorification of the All-Glorious Lord.
3. The transformative impact is highlighted, with the earthly house becoming a heavenly abode.
4. The stone structure is described as turning into a congress of the spirit.
5. The passage implies the spiritual elevation achieved through hosting such gatherings.

Questions and Answers:

1. What is the suggested activity during the Bahá'í gatherings in one's house according to the passage?

Answer: Engaging in the glorification of the All-Glorious Lord.

2. How does the passage describe the potential transformation of the earthly house?

Answer: It states that the house of earth will become a house of heaven.

3. What is the transformation attributed to the stone structure in the passage?

Answer: It is described as turning into a congress of the spirit.

4. What is the potential result of hosting gatherings of Bahá'ís in one's house, according to the passage?

Answer: The house undergoes a transformative process, becoming spiritually elevated.

5. What is the central theme conveyed regarding the impact of such gatherings?

Answer: The idea that the earthly house can become a heavenly abode and the stone structure a congress of the spirit.

Thou hast asked about places of worship and the underlying reason therefor. The wisdom in raising up such buildings is that at a given hour, the people should know it is time to meet, and all should gather together, and, harmoniously attuned one to another, engage in prayer; with the result that out of this coming together, unity and affection shall grow and flourish in the human heart.

Summary:

The passage explains the purpose of places of worship, stating that these buildings serve as a designated space where people can gather at a specific time to engage in harmonious prayer. The intention is to foster unity and affection among the individuals coming together.

Key points:

1. The question pertains to places of worship and their underlying reason.
2. The primary wisdom behind constructing such buildings is to establish a designated space for communal gatherings.
3. The specified purpose is for people to know the designated time to meet and engage in prayer.
4. The expected outcome of these gatherings is the growth and flourishing of unity and affection in the human heart.
5. The emphasis is on harmoniously attuned individuals coming together for a collective spiritual activity.

Questions and Answers:

1. What is the primary reason given in the passage for the construction of places of worship?

Answer: To provide a designated space for communal gatherings for prayer.

2. What is the specific purpose mentioned for people gathering at these places of worship?

Answer: To engage in harmonious prayer at a designated time.

3. What is the anticipated result of individuals coming together in these gatherings?

Answer: The growth and flourishing of unity and affection in the human heart.

4. How does the passage describe the desired state of individuals when engaging in prayer at these places of worship?

Answer: Harmoniously attuned to one another.

5. According to the passage, what should be the outcome of people gathering together at places of worship?

Answer: Unity and affection growing and flourishing in the human heart.

– 59 –

‘Abdu’l-Bahá hath long cherished the desire that a Mashriqu’l-Adhkár be upraised in that region. Praised be God, thanks to the strenuous efforts of the friends, in recent days the joyful news of this hath been announced. This service is highly acceptable at the Threshold of God, for the Mashriqu’l-Adhkár inspiriteth the lovers of God and delighteth their hearts, and causeth them to become steadfast and firm.

This is a matter of the utmost significance. If the erection of the House of Worship in a public place would arouse the hostility of evildoers, then the meeting must, in every locality, be held in some hidden place. Even in every hamlet, a place must be set aside as the Mashriqu’l-Adhkár, and even though it be underground.

Now, praised be God, ye have succeeded in this. Engage ye in the remembrance of God at dawn; rise ye up to praise and glorify Him. Blessed are ye, and joy be yours, O ye the righteous,

for having established the Dawning-Point of the Praises of God. Verily I ask of the Lord that He make you standards of salvation and banners of redemption, rippling high over the valleys and hills.

Summary:

The passage expresses 'Abdu'l-Bahá's long-standing desire for a Mashriqu'l-Adhkár in a specific region, and the joyous news of its realization through the strenuous efforts of the friends. The significance of the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár in inspiring and strengthening the lovers of God is emphasized. It acknowledges the importance of adapting the location of gatherings based on circumstances and commends the establishment of the Dawning-Point of the Praises of God, urging the believers to engage in the remembrance of God and rise to praise Him.

Key points:

1. 'Abdu'l-Bahá desires a Mashriqu'l-Adhkár in a specific region.
2. Joyful news of the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár's realization is announced.
3. The service of the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár is highly acceptable to God, inspiring and delighting the lovers of God.
4. The passage acknowledges the flexibility in choosing the location of gatherings, even suggesting underground spaces if needed.
5. Believers are commended for establishing the Dawning-Point of the Praises of God, with a call to engage in the remembrance of God and rise to praise Him.

Questions and Answers:

1. What has 'Abdu'l-Bahá long desired for the region mentioned in the passage?

Answer: The upraising of a Mashriqu'l-Adhkár.

2. How is the realization of the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár received in the passage?

Answer: With joyful news, thanks to the strenuous efforts of the friends.

3. What is emphasized as the significance of the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár in the passage?

Answer: It inspires and delights the lovers of God, making them steadfast and firm.

4. What flexibility is suggested regarding the location of gatherings in the passage?

Answer: If the House of Worship in a public place would arouse hostility, meetings can be held in hidden or even underground places.

5. What is the believers' commendation in the passage, and what are they urged to do?

Answer: They are commended for establishing the Dawning-Point of the Praises of God and urged to engage in the remembrance of God and rise to praise Him.

Although to outward seeming the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár is a material structure, yet it hath a spiritual effect. It forgoeth bonds of unity from heart to heart; it is a collective center for men's souls. Every city in which, during the days of the Manifestation, a temple was raised up, hath created security and constancy and peace, for such buildings were given over to the perpetual glorification of God, and only in the remembrance of God can the heart find rest. Gracious God! The edifice of the

House of Worship hath a powerful influence on every phase of life. Experience hath, in the east, clearly shown this to be a fact. Even if, in some small village, a house was designated as the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár, it produced a marked effect; how much greater would be the impact of one especially raised up.

Summary:

The passage conveys that although the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár appears as a material structure, it holds spiritual significance by forging bonds of unity and serving as a collective center for souls. Cities with temples during the Manifestation's days experienced security, constancy, and peace due to the perpetual glorification of God in these buildings. The House of Worship's influence extends to every aspect of life, creating a marked effect even in small villages. The passage highlights the significant impact of a specially raised Mashriqu'l-Adhkár.

Key points:

1. The Mashriqu'l-Adhkár, despite being a material structure, has a spiritual effect.
2. It forges bonds of unity and serves as a collective center for souls.
3. Cities with temples during the Manifestation experienced security, constancy, and peace.
4. The perpetual glorification of God in these buildings is emphasized.
5. The House of Worship's powerful influence on every phase of life is highlighted, with an example from the east demonstrating its impact even in small villages.

Questions and Answers:

1. What is the spiritual significance of the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár despite its outward material appearance?

Answer: It forges bonds of unity and serves as a collective center for souls.

2. What impact did cities with temples during the days of the Manifestation experience?

Answer: They experienced security, constancy, and peace.

3. According to the passage, what is the key factor in finding rest for the heart?

Answer: Only in the remembrance of God can the heart find rest.

4. How is the influence of the House of Worship described in the passage?

Answer: It has a powerful influence on every phase of life.

5. What example is provided in the passage to illustrate the impact of the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár even in small villages?

Answer: Even if a small village designates a house as the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár, it produces a marked effect; the impact would be greater with one specially raised up.

O Lord, O Thou Who dost bless all those who stand firm in the Covenant by enabling them, out of their love for the Light of the World, to expend what they have as an offering to the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár, the dayspring of Thy widespread rays and the proclaimer of Thine evidences, help Thou, both in this world and the world to come, these righteous, these upright and pious ones to draw ever nearer to Thy sacred Threshold, and make bright their faces with Thy dazzling splendors.

Verily art Thou the Generous, the Ever-Bestowing.

Summary:

The passage is a supplication, addressing God and seeking blessings for those who stand firm in the Covenant. It specifically asks for assistance and blessings for those who, out of love for the Light of the World, contribute offerings to the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár. The prayer expresses a desire for these individuals to draw nearer to God's sacred Threshold and be illuminated by divine splendors, both in this world and the world to come.

Key points:

1. The passage is a supplication addressed to God.
2. Blessings are sought for those who stand firm in the Covenant.
3. The focus is on individuals offering contributions to the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár out of love for the Light of the World.
4. The supplication seeks assistance for the righteous, upright, and pious ones to draw nearer to God's sacred Threshold.
5. The prayer concludes by acknowledging God as Generous and Ever-Bestowing.

Questions and Answers:

1. Who is the supplication addressed to in the passage?

Answer: The supplication is addressed to God.

2. What specific blessings are sought for those who stand firm in the Covenant?

Answer: Assistance, drawing nearer to God's sacred Threshold, and illumination with dazzling splendors.

3. Why do individuals offer contributions to the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár according to the passage?

Answer: Out of love for the Light of the World.

4. Who are the recipients of the supplication's request for assistance and blessings?

Answer: The righteous, upright, and pious ones.

5. How does the passage conclude, describing the nature of God?

Answer: The passage concludes by acknowledging God as Generous and Ever-Bestowing.

– 62 –

O my well-beloved daughter of the Kingdom! The letter thou hadst written to Dr. Esslemont was forwarded by him to the Land of Desire [The Holy Land]. I read it all through with the greatest attention. On the one hand, I was deeply touched, for thou hadst sheared off those fair tresses of thine with the shears of detachment from this world and of self-sacrifice in the path of the Kingdom of God. And on the other, I was greatly pleased, for that dearly beloved daughter hath evinced so great a spirit of self-sacrifice as to offer up so precious a part of her body in the pathway of the Cause of God. Hadst thou sought my opinion, I would in no wise have consented that thou shouldst shear off even a single thread of thy comely and wavy locks; nay, I myself would have contributed in thy name for the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár. This deed of thine is, however, an eloquent testimony to thy noble spirit of self-sacrifice. Thou hast, verily, sacrificed thy life and great will be the spiritual

results thou shalt obtain. Rest thou confident that day by day thou shalt progress and wax greater in firmness and in constancy. The bounties of Bahá'u'lláh shall compass thee about and the joyful tidings from on high shall time and again be imparted unto thee. And though it be thine hair that thou hast sacrificed, yet thou shalt be filled with the Spirit, and though it be this perishable member of thy body which thou hast laid down in the path of God, yet thou shalt find the Divine Gift, shalt behold the Celestial Beauty, obtain imperishable glory and attain unto everlasting life.

Summary:

The passage is a response to a letter from a well-beloved daughter who sacrificed her hair in the path of the Kingdom of God. 'Abdu'l-Bahá expresses deep emotion, both touched by her self-sacrifice and pleased with her noble spirit. He acknowledges that he wouldn't have consented to

the act but commends her eloquent testimony to her noble spirit. He assures her that her sacrifice will lead to spiritual progress, constancy, and the abundant bounties of Bahá'u'lláh.

Key points:

1. The response is addressed to a well-beloved daughter who sacrificed her hair for the Kingdom of God.
2. 'Abdu'l-Bahá expresses deep emotion, being both touched and pleased by her act.
3. He acknowledges her noble spirit of self-sacrifice, even though he wouldn't have consented to the act.
4. The daughter's sacrifice is seen as an eloquent testimony to her noble spirit.
5. Assurance is given that she will progress spiritually, surrounded by the bounties of Bahá'u'lláh, despite the sacrifice of her hair.

Questions and Answers:

1. What prompted 'Abdu'l-Bahá's deep emotion in the passage?

Answer: The well-beloved daughter's sacrifice of her hair for the Kingdom of God.

2. How does 'Abdu'l-Bahá describe the daughter's spirit in the response?

Answer: He acknowledges her noble spirit of self-sacrifice.

3. What does 'Abdu'l-Bahá express about his own opinion regarding the daughter's sacrifice?

Answer: He states that he wouldn't have consented to the act, and he would have contributed for the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár in her name.

4. What does 'Abdu'l-Bahá assure the daughter about regarding her sacrifice?

Answer: Assurance is given that she will progress spiritually, surrounded by the bounties of Bahá'u'lláh.

5. Despite the sacrifice of her hair, what is the anticipated outcome for the daughter according to 'Abdu'l-Bahá?

Answer: She will find the Divine Gift, behold the Celestial Beauty, obtain imperishable glory, and attain everlasting life.

– 63 –

O ye blessed souls!¹ The letter ye had written to Raḥmatu'lláh hath been perused. Many and various were the joyful tidings it conveyed, namely, that through the power of faith and constancy in the Covenant, numerous gatherings have been convened, and the loved ones are everywhere astir and active.

'Abdu'l-Bahá's ardent desire hath ever been that the soil of that hallowed spot, which in the earliest days of the Cause hath been refreshed and made verdant with the spring showers of grace, may so bloom and blossom as to fill every heart with joy.

Praised be the Lord, the Cause of God hath been proclaimed and promoted throughout the East and the West in such wise that no mind had ever conceived that the sweet savors of the Lord would so rapidly perfume all regions. This, verily, is only through the consummate bounties of the ever-blessed Beauty, Whose grace and Whose triumphing power are time and again abundantly received.

One of the wondrous events that has of late come to pass is this, that the edifice of the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár is being raised in the very heart of the American continent, and numerous souls from the surrounding regions are contributing for the erection of this holy Temple. Among these is a highly esteemed lady of the city of Manchester, who hath been moved to offer her share.

Having no portion of goods and earthly riches, she sheared off with her own hands the fine, long and precious tresses that adorned her head so gracefully, and offered them for sale, that the price thereof might promote the cause of the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár.

Consider ye, that though in the eyes of women nothing is more precious than rich and flowing locks, yet notwithstanding this, that highly honored lady hath evinced so rare and beautiful a spirit of self-sacrifice.

And though this was uncalled for, and 'Abdu'l-Bahá would not have consented to such a deed, yet as it doth reveal so high and noble a spirit of devotion, He was deeply touched thereby. Precious though the hair be in the sight of western women, nay, more precious than life itself, yet she offered it up as a sacrifice for the cause of the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár!

It is related that once in the days of the Apostle of God² He signified His desire that an army should advance in a certain direction, and leave was granted unto the faithful to raise contributions for the holy war. Among many was one man who gave a thousand camels, each laden with corn, another who gave half his substance, and still another who offered all that he had. But a woman stricken in years, whose sole possession was a handful of dates, came to the Apostle and laid at His feet her humble contribution. Thereupon the Prophet of God—may my life be offered up as a sacrifice unto Him—bade that this handful of dates be placed over and above all the contributions that had been gathered, thus asserting the merit and superiority thereof over all the rest. This was done because that elderly woman had no other earthly possessions but these.

And in like manner this esteemed lady had nothing else to contribute but her precious locks, and these she gloriously sacrificed in the cause of the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár.

Ponder and reflect how mighty and potent hath the Cause of God become! A woman of the west hath given her hair for the glory of the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár.

Nay, this is but a lesson unto them that perceive.

In conclusion I am greatly pleased with the loved ones in Najaf-Ábád for, from the very early dawn of the Cause unto this day they have one and all under all conditions evinced a great spirit of self-sacrifice.

Zaynu'l-Muqarrabín hath throughout his lifetime prayed with all the sincerity of his stainless soul on behalf of the believers in Najaf-Ábád and implored for them the grace of God and His divine confirmation.

The Lord be praised that the prayers of this gracious soul have been answered, for the effects thereof are everywhere manifest.

Summary:

The passage acknowledges a letter conveying joyful tidings of gatherings and activities, expressing 'Abdu'l-Bahá's desire for the hallowed spot to flourish. It highlights the rapid spread of the Cause globally, particularly the construction of the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár in the heart of America, with a noteworthy sacrifice by a lady who offered her hair for its cause. A comparison is drawn to an elderly woman's humble offering in the days of the Apostle of God, emphasizing the spirit of self-

sacrifice. The conclusion expresses great satisfaction with the believers in Najaf-Ábád and praises Zaynu'l-Muqarrabín's lifelong prayers for them.

Key points:

1. Acknowledgment of a letter conveying joyful tidings of gatherings and activities.
2. 'Abdu'l-Bahá's desire for the hallowed spot to flourish.
3. The rapid global spread of the Cause, with a focus on the construction of the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár in America.
4. A lady's sacrifice of her hair for the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár, reminiscent of an elderly woman's humble offering in the days of the Apostle of God.
5. Satisfaction with the believers in Najaf-Ábád and acknowledgment of Zaynu'l-Muqarrabín's prayers for them.

Questions and Answers:

1. What joyful tidings are conveyed in the letter mentioned in the passage?

Answer: The letter conveys joyful tidings of numerous gatherings and activities through the power of faith and constancy in the Covenant.

2. What desire does 'Abdu'l-Bahá express for the hallowed spot mentioned in the passage?

Answer: 'Abdu'l-Bahá desires that the hallowed spot may flourish and blossom, filling every heart with joy.

3. What significant global event is highlighted in the passage?

Answer: The construction of the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár in the heart of the American continent.

4. What noteworthy sacrifice is mentioned in connection with the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár?

Answer: A lady offered her precious locks for sale to contribute to the cause of the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár.

5. How is the lady's sacrifice compared to a historical event in the days of the Apostle of God?

Answer: A comparison is made to an elderly woman who offered a handful of dates in the days of the Apostle of God, emphasizing the spirit of self-sacrifice in both cases.

– 64 –

The Mashriqu'l-Adhkár is one of the most vital institutions in the world, and it hath many subsidiary branches. Although it is a House of Worship, it is also connected with a hospital, a drug dispensary, a traveler's hospice, a school for orphans, and a university for advanced studies. Every Mashriqu'l-Adhkár is connected with these five things. My hope is that the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár will now be established in America, and that gradually the hospital, the school, the university, the dispensary and the hospice, all functioning according to the most efficient and orderly procedures, will follow. Make these matters known to the beloved of the Lord, so that they will understand how very great is the importance of this "Dawning-Point of the Remembrance of God." The Temple is not only a place for worship; rather, in every respect is it complete and whole.

O thou dear handmaid of God! If only thou couldst know what a high station is destined for those souls who are severed from the world, are powerfully attracted to the Faith, and are teaching, under the sheltering shadow of Bahá'u'lláh! How thou wouldst rejoice, how thou wouldst, in

exultation and rapture, spread thy wings and soar heavenward—for being a follower of such a way, and a traveler toward such a Kingdom.

As to the terminology I used in my letter, bidding thee to consecrate thyself to service in the Cause of God, the meaning of it is this: limit thy thoughts to teaching the Faith. Act by day and night according to the teachings and counsels and admonitions of Bahá'u'lláh. This doth not preclude marriage. Thou canst take unto thyself a husband and at the same time serve the Cause of God; the one doth not preclude the other. Know thou the value of these days; let not this chance escape thee. Beg thou God to make thee a lighted candle, so that thou mayest guide a great multitude through this darksome world.

Summary:

The passage emphasizes the significance of the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár as one of the most vital institutions, not only as a House of Worship but also connected to a hospital, dispensary, hospice, school for orphans, and a university for advanced studies. The hope is expressed for the establishment of Mashriqu'l-Adhkár in America, followed by efficient and orderly functions of its connected institutions. Additionally, a dear handmaid is encouraged to understand the high station destined for those souls who are severed from the world and actively teach the Faith. The

terminology of consecration to service in the Cause of God is clarified, emphasizing the importance of focusing on teaching the Faith, which does not preclude marriage.

Key points:

1. The Mashriqu'l-Adhkár is highlighted as one of the most vital institutions, connected to various subsidiary branches.
2. These subsidiary branches include a hospital, drug dispensary, traveler's hospice, school for orphans, and a university for advanced studies.
3. The hope is expressed for the establishment of the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár in America.
4. Clarification is provided on the terminology of consecration, urging focus on teaching the Faith, which doesn't preclude marriage.
5. Encouragement is given to a dear handmaid to understand the high station of those souls who are severed from the world and actively teach the Faith.

Questions and Answers:

1. What are the subsidiary branches connected to the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár mentioned in the passage?

Answer: A hospital, a drug dispensary, a traveler's hospice, a school for orphans, and a university for advanced studies.

2. What is the hope expressed regarding the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár in the passage?

Answer: The hope is expressed for its establishment in America, followed by efficient and orderly functions of connected institutions.

3. How is the terminology of consecration clarified in the passage?

Answer: It is clarified to mean limiting one's thoughts to teaching the Faith, without excluding the possibility of marriage.

4. What encouragement is given to a dear handmaid in the passage?

Answer: The encouragement is to understand the high station destined for those souls who are severed from the world and actively teach the Faith.

5. What specific request is made to the dear handmaid in the passage?

Answer: The dear handmaid is urged to beg God to make her a lighted candle, guiding a great multitude through the darksome world.

– 65 –

O thou favored handmaid of the heavenly Kingdom! Thy letter hath been received. It conveyeth high aspirations and noble goals, saying that thou hast in mind to make a journey to the Far East, and that thou art ready to endure extreme hardships, in order to guide the souls, and to spread far and wide the glad tidings of God's Kingdom. This purpose of thine betokeneth that thou, dear handmaid of God, dost cherish the very noblest of all aims.

When delivering the glad tidings, speak out and say: the Promised One of all the world's peoples hath now been made manifest. For each and every people, and every religion, await a Promised One, and Bahá'u'lláh is that One Who is awaited by all; and therefore the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh will bring about the oneness of mankind, and the tabernacle of unity will be upraised on the heights

of the world, and the banners of the universality of all humankind will be unfurled on the peaks of the earth. When thou dost loose thy tongue to deliver this great good news, this will become the means of teaching the people.

Thy projected journey, however, is to a very far-away land, and unless a group of persons be available, the glad tidings will not take much effect in that place. If ye think best, travel instead to Persia, and on the way back, go through Japan and China. This would appear to be much better, and far more enjoyable. In any case, do whatever seemeth feasible, and it will be approved.

Summary:

The passage responds to a letter expressing the intention to make a journey to the Far East for the purpose of spreading the glad tidings of God's Kingdom. 'Abdu'l-Bahá praises the noble aspirations and goals, emphasizing the importance of proclaiming Bahá'u'lláh as the Promised One awaited by all peoples. He encourages the delivery of this great news, asserting that it will be the means of teaching the people. However, 'Abdu'l-Bahá suggests considering a journey to Persia instead, with a visit to Japan and China on the way back, as a more effective and enjoyable approach.

Key points:

1. Praise for the letter expressing the intention to make a journey to the Far East for noble goals.
2. Emphasis on proclaiming Bahá'u'lláh as the Promised One awaited by all peoples.
3. The anticipated impact of delivering the glad tidings as a means of teaching the people.
4. Suggestion to consider traveling to Persia instead, with a visit to Japan and China on the way back.
5. Encouragement to do whatever seems feasible, with the assurance that it will be approved.

Questions and Answers:

1. What does 'Abdu'l-Bahá praise in the letter received in the passage?

Answer: 'Abdu'l-Bahá praises the noble aspirations and goals expressed in the letter.

2. According to the passage, who is proclaimed as the Promised One awaited by all peoples?

Answer: Bahá'u'lláh is proclaimed as the Promised One awaited by all peoples.

3. How does 'Abdu'l-Bahá describe the impact of delivering the glad tidings?

Answer: He asserts that delivering this great news will be the means of teaching the people.

4. What suggestion does 'Abdu'l-Bahá make regarding the projected journey to the Far East?

Answer: 'Abdu'l-Bahá suggests considering a journey to Persia instead, with a visit to Japan and China on the way back.

5. What encouragement does 'Abdu'l-Bahá provide regarding the feasibility of the journey?

Answer: He encourages doing whatever seems feasible, with the assurance that it will be approved.

O thou who hast sought illumination from the light of guidance! Praise thou God that He hath directed thee to the light of truth and hath invited thee to enter the Kingdom of Abhá. Thy sight hath been illumined and thy heart hath been turned into a rose garden. I pray for thee that thou

mayest ever grow in faith and assurance, shine like unto a torch in the assemblies and bestow upon them the light of guidance.

Whenever an illumined assembly of the friends of God is gathered, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, although bodily absent, is yet present in spirit and in soul. I am always a traveler to America and am assuredly associating with spiritual and illumined friends. Distance is annihilated and prevents not the close and intimate association of two souls that are closely attached in heart even though they may be in two different countries. I am therefore thy close companion, attuned and in harmony with thy soul.

Summary:

The passage expresses gratitude for the seeker finding illumination from the light of guidance and entering the Kingdom of Abhá. The individual is praised for their illuminated sight and transformed heart. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá prays for continuous growth in faith and assurance, urging the person to shine as a torch in assemblies and share the light of guidance. 'Abdu'l-Bahá reassures

that, although physically absent, he is spiritually present whenever an illumined assembly gathers, emphasizing the close association and harmony between souls despite physical distance.

Key points:

1. Expression of gratitude for finding illumination from the light of guidance and entering the Kingdom of Abhá.
2. Praise for the individual's illuminated sight and transformed heart into a rose garden.
3. Prayer for continuous growth in faith and assurance.
4. Encouragement to shine as a torch in assemblies and share the light of guidance.
5. Reassurance of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's spiritual presence in illumined assemblies, emphasizing the close association and harmony between souls.

Questions and Answers:

1. What is the individual praised for in the passage?

Answer: The individual is praised for finding illumination from the light of guidance, entering the Kingdom of Abhá, and having an illuminated sight and transformed heart.

2. What does 'Abdu'l-Bahá pray for regarding the person?

Answer: 'Abdu'l-Bahá prays for the person's continuous growth in faith and assurance.

3. What encouragement does 'Abdu'l-Bahá give regarding the person's role in assemblies?

Answer: The person is encouraged to shine as a torch in assemblies and share the light of guidance.

4. How does 'Abdu'l-Bahá describe his connection with illumined assemblies?

Answer: 'Abdu'l-Bahá states that although physically absent, he is spiritually present whenever an illumined assembly of the friends of God is gathered.

5. Despite physical distance, how does 'Abdu'l-Bahá describe the association between souls?

Answer: 'Abdu'l-Bahá emphasizes the close association and harmony between souls, even if they are in two different countries.

– 67 –

O thou lady of the Kingdom! Thy letter sent from New York hath been received. Its contents imparted joy and gladness for they indicated that with a firm resolve and a pure intention thou hast determined to travel to Paris, that thou mayest in that silent city enkindle the fire of the love of God and in the midst of that darkness of nature shine like unto a resplendent candle. This journey is highly praiseworthy and suitable. When thou reachest Paris, thou must strive, no matter how small the number of the friends may be, to institute the assembly of the Covenant and to vivify the souls through the power of the Covenant.

Paris is exceedingly dispirited and is in a state of torpor and so far it hath not burst into flames although the French nation is an active and lively one. But the world of nature hath fully stretched its pavilion over Paris and hath done away with religious sentiments. But this power of the Covenant shall heat every freezing soul, shall bestow light upon everything that is dark and shall secure for the captive in the hand of nature the true freedom of the Kingdom.

Arise thou at present in Paris with the power of the Kingdom, with a divine confirmation, with a genuine zeal and ardor and with a flame of the love of God. Roar like unto a lion and exhibit

such ecstasy and love among these few souls that praise and glorification may continuously reach thee from the divine Kingdom and mighty confirmations may descend upon thee. Rest thou assured. If thou dost act accordingly and hoist the standard of the Covenant, Paris shall burst into flame. Be constantly attached to and seek always the confirmations of Bahá'u'lláh for these turn the drop into a sea and convert the gnat into an eagle.

Summary:

The passage is a response to a letter from a lady in New York expressing her intention to travel to Paris to kindle the fire of the love of God. 'Abdu'l-Bahá commends her firm resolve and pure intention. He encourages her to establish the assembly of the Covenant and vivify souls through the power of the Covenant in Paris, which is described as dispirited and in a state of torpor. 'Abdu'l-Bahá expresses confidence that with the power of the Kingdom, divine confirmation, zeal, ardor, and love for God, she can awaken Paris spiritually. He assures her that if she acts accordingly and hoists the standard of the Covenant, Paris will burst into flame.

Key points:

1. Commendation for the lady's firm resolve and pure intention to travel to Paris.
2. Encouragement to establish the assembly of the Covenant and vivify souls through its power.
3. Description of Paris as dispirited and in a state of torpor, lacking religious sentiments.
4. Confidence that with the power of the Kingdom, divine confirmation, zeal, ardor, and love for God, spiritual awakening is possible.
5. Assurance that if she hoists the standard of the Covenant, Paris will burst into flame.

Questions and Answers:

1. What qualities of the lady are commended by 'Abdu'l-Bahá in the passage?

Answer: 'Abdu'l-Bahá commends her firm resolve and pure intention to travel to Paris.

2. What is the lady encouraged to establish in Paris?

Answer: The lady is encouraged to establish the assembly of the Covenant in Paris.

3. How does 'Abdu'l-Bahá describe the current state of Paris?

Answer: Paris is described as dispirited and in a state of torpor, lacking religious sentiments.

4. What elements does 'Abdu'l-Bahá believe will contribute to spiritual awakening in Paris?

Answer: 'Abdu'l-Bahá believes that the power of the Kingdom, divine confirmation, zeal, ardor, and love for God will contribute to spiritual awakening in Paris.

5. What assurance does 'Abdu'l-Bahá give regarding the lady's efforts in Paris?

Answer: 'Abdu'l-Bahá assures the lady that if she hoists the standard of the Covenant, Paris will burst into flame.

O ye who are firm in the Covenant and the Testament! Your letter was received and your blessed names were one by one perused. The contents of the letter were divine inspirations and manifest bounties because they were indicative of the union of the friends and the harmony of all hearts.

Today the most remarkable favor of God centereth around union and harmony among the friends; so that this unity and concord may be the cause of the promulgation of the oneness of the world of humanity, may emancipate the world from this intense darkness of enmity and rancor, and that the Sun of Truth may shine in full and perfect effulgence.

Today, all the peoples of the world are indulging in self-interest and exert the utmost effort and endeavor to promote their own material interests. They are worshipping themselves and not the divine reality, nor the world of mankind. They seek diligently their own benefit and not the common weal. This is because they are captives of the world of nature and unaware of the divine teachings, of the bounty of the Kingdom and of the Sun of Truth. But ye, praise be to God, are at present especially favored with this bounty, have become of the chosen, have been informed of the heavenly instructions, have gained admittance into the Kingdom of God, have become the recipients of unbounded blessings and have been baptized with the Water of Life, with the fire of the love of God and with the Holy Spirit.

Strive, therefore, with heart and soul that ye become ignited candles in the assemblage of the world, glittering stars on the horizon of Truth and may become the cause of the propagation of the light of the Kingdom; in order that the world of humanity may be converted into a divine realm, the nether world may become the world on high, the love of God and the mercy of the Lord may raise their canopy upon the apex of the world, human souls may become the waves of the ocean of truth, the world of humanity may grow into one blessed tree, the verses of oneness may be chanted and the melodies of sanctity may reach the Supreme Concourse.

Day and night I entreat and supplicate to the Kingdom of God and beg for you infinite assistance and confirmation. Do not take into consideration your own aptitudes and capacities, but fix your gaze on the consummate bounty, the divine bestowal and the power of the Holy Spirit—the power that converteth the drop into a sea and the star into a sun.

Praise be to God, the hosts of the Supreme Concourse secure the victory and the power of the Kingdom is ready to assist and to support. Should ye at every instant unloosen the tongue in thanksgiving and gratitude, ye would not be able to discharge yourselves of the obligation of gratitude for these bestowals.

Consider: eminent personages whose fame hath spread all over the world shall, ere long, fade into utter nothingness as the result of their deprivation of this heavenly bounty; no name and no fame shall they leave behind, and of them no fruit and trace shall survive. But as the effulgences of the Sun of Truth have dawned forth upon you and ye have attained everlasting life, ye shall shine and sparkle forevermore from the horizon of existence.

Peter was a fisherman and Mary Magdalene a peasant, but as they were specially favored with the blessings of Christ, the horizon of their faith became illumined, and down to the present day they are shining from the horizon of everlasting glory. In this station, merit and capacity are not to be considered; nay rather, the resplendent rays of the Sun of Truth, which have illumined these mirrors, must be taken into account.

Ye are inviting me to America. I am likewise longing to gaze upon those illumined faces and converse and associate with those true friends. But the magnetic power which shall draw me to those shores is the union and harmony of the friends, their behavior and conduct in accordance with the teachings of God and the firmness of all in the Covenant and the Testament.

O Divine Providence! This assemblage is composed of Thy friends who are attracted to Thy beauty and are set ablaze by the fire of Thy love. Turn these souls into heavenly angels, resuscitate them through the breath of Thy Holy Spirit, grant them eloquent tongues and resolute hearts, bestow on them heavenly power and merciful susceptibilities, cause them to

become the promulgators of the oneness of mankind and the cause of love and concord in the world of humanity, so that the perilous darkness of ignorant prejudice may vanish through the light of the Sun of Truth, this dreary world may become illumined, this material realm may absorb the rays of the world of spirit, these different colors may merge into one color and the melody of praise may rise to the kingdom of Thy sanctity.

Verily, Thou art the Omnipotent and the Almighty!

Summary:

The passage is a letter addressing those firm in the Covenant and the Testament. 'Abdu'l-Bahá expresses joy over the unity and harmony among the friends, highlighting it as a remarkable favor of God. He emphasizes the importance of this unity for the promulgation of the oneness of humanity and the establishment of a divine realm. 'Abdu'l-Bahá contrasts the self-interest prevailing in the world with the chosen ones who have received divine teachings and been baptized with the Water of Life. He encourages them to become ignited candles and glittering stars, propagating the light of the Kingdom. 'Abdu'l-Bahá beseeches divine assistance and urges

gratitude for the bestowed blessings. He underscores that the effulgences of the Sun of Truth will grant everlasting life and distinction, irrespective of worldly fame or capacity.

Key points:

1. Joy over the unity and harmony among those firm in the Covenant and the Testament.
2. Importance of unity for the promulgation of the oneness of humanity and the establishment of a divine realm.
3. Contrast between self-interest prevailing in the world and the chosen ones baptized with the Water of Life.
4. Encouragement to become ignited candles and glittering stars, propagating the light of the Kingdom.
5. Beseeching divine assistance, urging gratitude for bestowed blessings, and emphasizing the eternal distinction granted by the effulgences of the Sun of Truth.

Questions and Answers:

1. What does 'Abdu'l-Bahá consider the most remarkable favor of God in the passage?

Answer: The most remarkable favor of God, according to 'Abdu'l-Bahá, centers around the union and harmony among the friends.

2. How does 'Abdu'l-Bahá describe the prevailing state of the world?

Answer: 'Abdu'l-Bahá describes the peoples of the world as indulging in self-interest, promoting their own material interests, and worshipping themselves instead of the divine reality.

3. What is the significance of the chosen ones being baptized with the Water of Life?

Answer: Being baptized with the Water of Life signifies the chosen ones' reception of divine teachings, unbounded blessings, and immersion in the love of God.

4. What does 'Abdu'l-Bahá urge the believers to become in the passage?

Answer: 'Abdu'l-Bahá urges the believers to become ignited candles in the assemblage of the world and glittering stars on the horizon of Truth.

5. What does 'Abdu'l-Bahá attribute the eternal distinction of the believers to?

Answer: 'Abdu'l-Bahá attributes the eternal distinction of the believers to the effulgences of the Sun of Truth, which grants them everlasting life and prominence.

Thou hast written concerning organization. The divine teachings and the admonitions and exhortations of Bahá'u'lláh are manifestly evident. These constitute the organization of the Kingdom and their enforcement is obligatory. The least deviation from them is absolute error.

Thou hast written concerning my travel to America. If thou couldst see how the waves of constant occupation are surging, thou wouldst have considered that time for travel is absolutely lacking; in times of fixed residence partial rest is even impossible. God willing, I trust, through the bounty of Bahá'u'lláh, that as soon as means for the composure of mind and of heart are provided, I shall determine to journey and shall inform thee about it.

Summary:

The passage addresses the theme of organization and travel. It asserts that the divine teachings and admonitions of Bahá'u'lláh are evident and constitute the organization of the Kingdom. Any deviation from these teachings is considered absolute error. Regarding travel to America, 'Abdu'l-Bahá conveys that constant occupation prevents immediate plans for travel, emphasizing the need for composure of mind and heart before making such decisions.

Key points:

1. The divine teachings and admonitions of Bahá'u'lláh constitute the organization of the Kingdom.
2. Any deviation from these teachings is considered absolute error.
3. Constant occupation makes travel plans challenging.
4. Partial rest is deemed impossible during times of fixed residence.
5. 'Abdu'l-Bahá expresses hope to travel to America once means for composure of mind and heart are provided.

Questions and Answers:

1. What is described as constituting the organization of the Kingdom?

Answer: The divine teachings and admonitions of Bahá'u'lláh are described as constituting the organization of the Kingdom.

2. How does the passage characterize any deviation from the divine teachings?

Answer: Any deviation from the divine teachings is characterized as absolute error.

3. Why does 'Abdu'l-Bahá state that time for travel is lacking?

Answer: 'Abdu'l-Bahá mentions that constant occupation makes time for travel lacking.

4. What is emphasized as challenging during times of fixed residence?

Answer: The passage emphasizes that partial rest is considered impossible during times of fixed residence.

5. What condition does 'Abdu'l-Bahá express a need for before making travel plans?

Answer: 'Abdu'l-Bahá expresses a need for the composure of mind and heart before making travel plans.

– 70 –

O thou ignited candle! Thy letter was received. Its contents imparted spiritual gladness, for they were pervaded by spiritual sentiments and indicated the attraction of thy heart, attachment to the Kingdom of God and love for His divine teachings.

Verily, thou showest a high endeavor, hast a pure and sanctified purpose, wishest naught save the good pleasure of God, seekest nothing but the attainment of limitless bounties, and art engaged in the promulgation of divine teachings and the explanation of abstruse metaphysical problems. It is my hope that, by the favor of Bahá'u'lláh, thou and thy respected wife may daily increase in firmness and steadfastness, so that in that exalted land ye may become two upraised standards and two resplendent lights.

Extensive travel in October, to the north, south, east and west, accompanied by that candle of the love of God, Mrs. Maxwell, would be highly acceptable. My hope is that she may entirely recover; this beloved handmaid of God is like a flame of fire and thinks day and night of nothing save service to God. For the present, travel throughout the northern states, and in the winter season hasten to the states in the south. Your service should consist of eloquent speeches delivered in gatherings wherein ye may promulgate the divine teachings. If possible, undertake at some time a voyage to the Hawaiian Islands.

The events which have transpired were all recorded fifty years ago in the Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh—Tablets which have been printed, published and spread throughout the world. The teachings of Bahá'u'lláh are the light of this age and the spirit of this century. Expound each of them at every gathering.

The first is investigation of truth,

The second, the oneness of mankind,

The third, universal peace,

The fourth, conformity between science and divine revelation,

The fifth, abandonment of racial, religious, worldly and political prejudices, prejudices which destroy the foundation of mankind.

The sixth is righteousness and justice,

The seventh, the betterment of morals and heavenly education,

The eighth, the equality of the two sexes,

The ninth, the diffusion of knowledge and education,

The tenth, economic questions,

and so on and so forth. Strive that souls may attain unto the light of guidance and hold fast unto the hem of Bahá'u'lláh.

The letter thou hast enclosed was perused. When man's soul is rarified and cleansed, spiritual links are established, and from these bonds sensations felt by the heart are produced. The human heart resembleth a mirror. When this is purified human hearts are attuned and reflect one another, and thus spiritual emotions are generated. This is like the world of dreams when man is detached from things which are tangible and experienceth those of the spirit. What amazing laws operate, and what remarkable discoveries are made! And it may even be that detailed communications are registered...

Finally, I hope that in Chicago the friends may become united and may illumine that city, for therein the dawn of the Cause appeared, and in this lieth its preference over other cities. Therefore it must be held in respect; perchance it may, God willing, be freed from all spiritual afflictions, and may attain unto perfect health and become a center of the Covenant and Testament.

Summary:

The letter is addressed to an ignited candle, expressing joy over the recipient's spiritual sentiments and attachment to the Kingdom of God. It encourages extensive travel accompanied by Mrs. Maxwell, emphasizing her recovery and dedicated service. The events mentioned are said to be recorded in Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh, and the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh are outlined for exposition. The spiritual connections between souls are discussed, likening the human heart to a mirror. The

hope is expressed for unity and illumination in Chicago, recognizing its historical significance in the dawn of the Cause.

Key points:

1. Appreciation for the recipient's spiritual sentiments and dedication to the Kingdom of God.
2. Encouragement for extensive travel, especially with Mrs. Maxwell, emphasizing her recovery and service.
3. Reference to the recorded events in Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh and outlining key teachings for exposition.
4. Discussion on spiritual connections between souls and the metaphor of the human heart as a mirror.
5. Hope for unity and illumination in Chicago, recognizing its historical significance in the dawn of the Cause.

Questions and Answers:

1. What is the recipient praised for in the letter?

Answer: The recipient is praised for their spiritual sentiments, high endeavor, pure purpose, and attachment to the Kingdom of God.

2. Who is encouraged for extensive travel, and with whom?

Answer: Mrs. Maxwell is encouraged for extensive travel, and the recipient is suggested as a companion, emphasizing her recovery and dedicated service.

3. What are the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh outlined for exposition?

Answer: The outlined teachings include investigation of truth, the oneness of mankind, universal peace, conformity between science and divine revelation, abandonment of prejudices, righteousness and justice, betterment of morals and heavenly education, equality of the sexes, diffusion of knowledge and education, economic questions, and more.

4. How is the metaphor of the human heart used in the letter?

Answer: The human heart is likened to a mirror, and when purified, it reflects spiritual emotions. Spiritual links between hearts are established, and when rarified and cleansed, they generate sensations felt by the heart.

5. Why is Chicago mentioned, and what hope is expressed for it?

Answer: Chicago is mentioned because the dawn of the Cause appeared there. The hope is expressed for unity, illumination, freedom from spiritual afflictions, and becoming a center of the Covenant and Testament.

O thou beloved maidservant of God! Thy letter was received and its contents revealed the fact that the friends, in perfect energy and vitality, are engaged in the propagation of the heavenly teachings. This news hath caused intense joy and gladness. For every era hath a spirit; the spirit of this illumined era lieth in the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh. For these lay the foundation of the oneness of the world of humanity and promulgate universal brotherhood. They are founded upon the unity of science and religion and upon investigation of truth. They uphold the principle that religion must

be the cause of amity, union and harmony among men. They establish the equality of both sexes and propound economic principles which are for the happiness of individuals. They diffuse universal education, that every soul may as much as possible have a share of knowledge. They abrogate and nullify religious, racial, political, patriotic and economic prejudices and the like. Those teachings that are scattered throughout the Epistles and Tablets are the cause of the illumination and the life of the world of humanity. Whoever promulgateth them will verily be assisted by the Kingdom of God.

The President of the Republic, Dr. Wilson, is indeed serving the Kingdom of God for he is restless and strives day and night that the rights of all men may be preserved safe and secure, that even small nations, like greater ones, may dwell in peace and comfort, under the protection of Righteousness and Justice. This purpose is indeed a lofty one. I trust that the incomparable Providence will assist and confirm such souls under all conditions.

Summary:

The letter expresses joy upon receiving news that the friends are energetically engaged in propagating the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh. It highlights the spirit of the illumined era, emphasizing the foundational principles of the oneness of humanity, universal brotherhood, unity of science and religion, investigation of truth, equality of the sexes, economic principles for happiness, and universal education. The teachings are seen as the cause of illumination and life for humanity, and those who promote them will be assisted by the Kingdom of God. The letter also acknowledges

President Wilson's efforts in serving the Kingdom of God by striving for the rights and peace of all nations.

Key points:

1. Joy upon learning that friends are actively propagating Bahá'u'lláh's teachings.
2. Emphasis on the spirit of the illumined era and the foundational principles it embodies.
3. Highlighting principles such as oneness of humanity, universal brotherhood, unity of science and religion, investigation of truth, equality of the sexes, economic principles, and universal education.
4. Recognition of the teachings as the cause of illumination and life for humanity.
5. Acknowledgment of President Wilson's efforts in serving the Kingdom of God by promoting the rights and peace of all nations.

Questions and Answers:

1. What causes intense joy and gladness in the letter?

Answer: The news that the friends are energetically engaged in propagating the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh causes intense joy and gladness.

2. What principles are emphasized as the foundation of the illumined era?

Answer: The foundational principles include the oneness of humanity, universal brotherhood, unity of science and religion, investigation of truth, equality of the sexes, economic principles for happiness, and universal education.

3. How are those who promote Bahá'u'lláh's teachings viewed in the letter?

Answer: Those who promote Bahá'u'lláh's teachings are viewed as being assisted by the Kingdom of God.

4. Whose efforts are acknowledged in serving the Kingdom of God, and why?

Answer: President Wilson's efforts are acknowledged for striving day and night to preserve the rights of all men and ensure peace and comfort for nations, aligning with the principles of righteousness and justice.

5. What is considered the cause of illumination and life for humanity?

Answer: The teachings of Bahá'u'lláh are considered the cause of illumination and life for humanity, according to the letter.

– 72 –

O thou true friend! Read, in the school of God, the lessons of the spirit, and learn from love's Teacher the innermost truths. Seek out the secrets of Heaven, and tell of the overflowing grace and favor of God.

Although to acquire the sciences and arts is the greatest glory of mankind, this is so only on condition that man's river flow into the mighty sea, and draw from God's ancient source His inspiration. When this cometh to pass, then every teacher is as a shoreless ocean, every pupil a prodigal fountain of knowledge. If, then, the pursuit of knowledge lead to the beauty of Him Who is the Object of all Knowledge, how excellent that goal; but if not, a mere drop will perhaps shut

a man off from flooding grace, for with learning cometh arrogance and pride, and it bringeth on error and indifference to God.

The sciences of today are bridges to reality; if then they lead not to reality, naught remains but fruitless illusion. By the one true God! If learning be not a means of access to Him, the Most Manifest, it is nothing but evident loss.

It is incumbent upon thee to acquire the various branches of knowledge, and to turn thy face toward the beauty of the Manifest Beauty, that thou mayest be a sign of saving guidance amongst the peoples of the world, and a focal center of understanding in this sphere from which the wise and their wisdom are shut out, except for those who set foot in the Kingdom of lights and become informed of the veiled and hidden mystery, the well-guarded secret.

Summary:

The letter encourages the pursuit of knowledge but emphasizes that acquiring sciences and arts is only glorious if one's learning leads to recognizing the beauty of God and His inspiration. The importance of knowledge lies in its ability to serve as a bridge to reality. If knowledge does not lead to the recognition of God, it becomes a fruitless illusion. The letter urges the reader to acquire

various branches of knowledge with the ultimate goal of turning toward the beauty of the Manifest Beauty (God) and becoming a source of saving guidance among the peoples of the world.

Key points:

1. The pursuit of knowledge is the greatest glory of mankind.
2. Knowledge is valuable when it leads to recognizing the beauty of God.
3. Sciences and arts should be bridges to reality, and if they do not lead to reality, they result in evident loss.
4. Acquiring various branches of knowledge is incumbent, but the ultimate goal is to recognize the beauty of the Manifest Beauty (God).
5. Knowledge should make one a sign of saving guidance and a focal center of understanding for those who enter the Kingdom of lights.

Questions and Answers:

1. What is considered the greatest glory of mankind in the letter?

Answer: The pursuit of knowledge is considered the greatest glory of mankind.

2. What condition is set for knowledge to be considered glorious?

Answer: Knowledge is glorious only if it leads to recognizing the beauty of God.

3. How does the letter describe knowledge that does not lead to recognizing God?

Answer: Knowledge that does not lead to recognizing God is described as a fruitless illusion.

4. What is incumbent upon the reader according to the letter?

Answer: It is incumbent upon the reader to acquire various branches of knowledge with the goal of recognizing the beauty of God.

5. What is the ultimate purpose of acquiring knowledge, as mentioned in the letter?

Answer: The ultimate purpose of acquiring knowledge is to become a sign of saving guidance among the peoples of the world and a focal center of understanding for those who enter the Kingdom of lights.

– 73 –

O daughter of the Kingdom! Thy letter hath come and its contents make clear the fact that thou hast directed all thy thoughts toward acquiring light from the realms of mystery. So long as the thoughts of an individual are scattered he will achieve no results, but if his thinking be concentrated on a single point wonderful will be the fruits thereof.

One cannot obtain the full force of the sunlight when it is cast on a flat mirror, but once the sun shineth upon a concave mirror, or on a lens that is convex, all its heat will be concentrated on a single point, and that one point will burn the hottest. Thus is it necessary to focus one's thinking on a single point so that it will become an effective force.

Thou didst wish to celebrate the Day of Ridván with a feast, and to have those present on that day engage in reciting Tablets with delight and joy, and thou didst request me to send thee a letter to be read on that day. My letter is this:

O ye beloved, and ye handmaids of the Merciful! This is the day when the Daystar of Truth rose over the horizon of life, and its glory spread, and its brightness shone out with such power

that it clove the dense and high-piled clouds and mounted the skies of the world in all its splendor. Hence do ye witness a new stirring throughout all created things.

See how, in this day, the scope of sciences and arts hath widened out, and what wondrous technical advances have been made, and to what a high degree the mind's powers have increased, and what stupendous inventions have appeared.

This age is indeed as a hundred other ages: should ye gather the yield of a hundred ages, and set that against the accumulated product of our times, the yield of this one era will prove greater than that of a hundred gone before. Take ye, for an example, the sum total of all the books that were ever written in ages past, and compare that with the books and treatises that our era hath produced: these books, written in our day alone, far and away exceed the total number of volumes that have been written down the ages. See how powerful is the influence exerted by the Daystar of the world upon the inner essence of all created things!

But alas, a thousand times alas! The eyes see it not, the ears are deaf, and the hearts and minds are oblivious of this supreme bestowal. Strive ye then, with all your hearts and souls, to awaken those who slumber, to cause the blind to see, and the dead to rise.

Summary:

The letter emphasizes the importance of focused thinking and concentration to achieve effective results. The analogy of sunlight on a concave or convex surface illustrates the need for concentrated thinking on a single point. The recipient's desire to celebrate the Day of Ridván with joy and recitations prompts the sender to acknowledge the significance of the day and highlight the advancements in sciences, arts, and inventions during this era. Despite these advancements,

the letter laments the lack of awareness and calls for efforts to awaken those who are spiritually asleep.

Key points:

1. The importance of concentrated and focused thinking to achieve effective results.
2. Analogy of sunlight on a concave or convex surface as a metaphor for concentrated thinking.
3. Acknowledgment of the recipient's desire to celebrate the Day of Riḍván with joy and recitations.
4. Recognition of the advancements in sciences, arts, and inventions during the current era.
5. Lamentation about the lack of awareness and a call to strive for awakening those who are spiritually asleep.

Questions and Answers:

1. What does 'Abdu'l-Bahá emphasize regarding the recipient's thinking?

Answer: 'Abdu'l-Bahá emphasizes the importance of concentrated and focused thinking to achieve effective results.

2. What metaphor does 'Abdu'l-Bahá use to illustrate the importance of concentrated thinking?

Answer: 'Abdu'l-Bahá uses the analogy of sunlight on a concave or convex surface as a metaphor for concentrated thinking.

3. What occasion does the recipient express a desire to celebrate in the letter?

Answer: The recipient expresses a desire to celebrate the Day of Riḍván with joy and recitations.

4. What does the letter acknowledge regarding the advancements of the current era?

Answer: The letter acknowledges the advancements in sciences, arts, and inventions during the current era.

5. What does 'Abdu'l-Bahá lament and call for regarding awareness?

Answer: 'Abdu'l-Bahá laments the lack of awareness and calls for efforts to awaken those who are spiritually asleep.

– 74 –

O bird that singeth sweetly of the Abhá Beauty! In this new and wondrous dispensation the veils of superstition have been torn asunder and the prejudices of eastern peoples stand condemned. Among certain nations of the East, music was considered reprehensible, but in this new age the Manifest Light hath, in His holy Tablets, specifically proclaimed that music, sung or played, is spiritual food for soul and heart.

The musician's art is among those arts worthy of the highest praise, and it moveth the hearts of all who grieve. Wherefore, O thou Shahnáz,¹ play and sing out the holy words of God with wondrous tones in the gatherings of the friends, that the listener may be freed from chains of care and sorrow, and his soul may leap for joy and humble itself in prayer to the realm of Glory.

Summary:

The letter addresses the significance of music in the new dispensation, highlighting the removal of superstitions and condemnation of prejudices related to music. It specifically praises the musician's

art, considering it worthy of the highest acclaim. The recipient, referred to as Shahnáz, is encouraged to play and sing the holy words of God with wondrous tones during gatherings of the friends to uplift hearts and bring joy, freeing listeners from the chains of care and sorrow.

Key points:

1. The removal of superstitions and condemnation of prejudices related to music in the new dispensation.
2. The Manifest Light's proclamation in holy Tablets that music, sung or played, is spiritual food for the soul and heart.
3. Recognition of the musician's art as one of the arts deserving the highest praise.
4. Encouragement to Shahnáz to play and sing the holy words of God with wondrous tones in gatherings of the friends.
5. The desired outcome of using music to uplift hearts, bring joy, and free listeners from the chains of care and sorrow.

Questions and Answers:

1. How does the new dispensation view music compared to superstitions and prejudices of the past?

Answer: The new dispensation views music favorably, removing superstitions and condemning prejudices related to it.

2. What specific proclamation does the Manifest Light make about music in the holy Tablets?

Answer: The Manifest Light proclaims in holy Tablets that music, whether sung or played, is spiritual food for the soul and heart.

3. What praise is given to the musician's art in the letter?

Answer: The musician's art is considered among those arts worthy of the highest praise.

4. Who is encouraged to play and sing the holy words of God in gatherings of the friends?

Answer: Shahnáz is encouraged to play and sing the holy words of God in gatherings of the friends.

5. What is the desired outcome of using music in gatherings, according to the letter?

Answer: The desired outcome is to uplift hearts, bring joy, and free listeners from the chains of care and sorrow through the use of music.

Strive with heart and soul in order to bring about union and harmony among the white and the black and prove thereby the unity of the Bahá'í world wherein distinction of color findeth no place, but where hearts only are considered. Praise be to God, the hearts of the friends are united and linked together, whether they be from the east or the west, from north or from south, whether they be German, French, Japanese, American, and whether they pertain to the white, the black, the red, the yellow or the brown race. Variations of color, of land and of race are of no importance in the Bahá'í Faith; on the contrary, Bahá'í unity overcometh them all and doeth away with all these fancies and imaginations.

Summary:

The letter emphasizes the imperative of striving wholeheartedly to achieve union and harmony between individuals of different races, specifically highlighting unity between white and black Bahá'ís. The Bahá'í world is envisioned as a place where color distinctions have no relevance, and hearts are the sole consideration. The unity of Bahá'ís, irrespective of race, nationality, or color, is praised as a manifestation of the oneness the Bahá'í Faith seeks to promote.

Key points:

1. Striving for union and harmony among white and black Bahá'ís.
2. Emphasis on proving the unity of the Bahá'í world, where color distinctions have no place.
3. Recognition that hearts are the primary consideration in the Bahá'í Faith.
4. Unity among Bahá'ís is stressed, regardless of geographic origin, nationality, or race.
5. The elimination of variations in color, land, and race is considered essential for Bahá'í unity.

Questions and Answers:

1. What is the primary goal emphasized in the letter regarding unity among Bahá'ís?

Answer: The primary goal is to bring about union and harmony among white and black Bahá'ís.

2. How does the Bahá'í Faith view distinctions of color within its community?

Answer: Distinctions of color find no place in the Bahá'í Faith; unity overcomes all variations of color.

3. What is highlighted as the sole consideration in the Bahá'í world?

Answer: Hearts are considered the sole and most important aspect in the Bahá'í world.

4. According to the letter, what factors are of no importance in the Bahá'í Faith?

Answer: Variations of color, land, and race are considered of no importance in the Bahá'í Faith.

5. What is praised as a manifestation of the Bahá'í Faith's ideals?

Answer: The unity of Bahá'ís, irrespective of race, nationality, or color, is praised as a manifestation of the Bahá'í Faith's ideals of oneness.

– 76 –

O thou who hast an illumined heart! Thou art even as the pupil of the eye, the very wellspring of the light, for God's love hath cast its rays upon thine inmost being and thou hast turned thy face toward the Kingdom of thy Lord.

Intense is the hatred, in America, between black and white, but my hope is that the power of the Kingdom will bind these two in friendship, and serve them as a healing balm.

Let them look not upon a man's color but upon his heart. If the heart be filled with light, that man is nigh unto the threshold of his Lord; but if not, that man is careless of his Lord, be he white or be he black.

Summary:

The letter addresses an individual with an illumined heart, describing them as the pupil of the eye and a wellspring of light due to the influence of God's love. The letter expresses concern about the

intense racial hatred between black and white individuals in America. The hope is articulated that the power of the Kingdom will foster friendship and act as a healing force. The guidance urges people to look beyond a person's color and focus on their heart, emphasizing that a heart filled with light is close to God, irrespective of one's race.

Key points:

1. Addressing an individual with an illumined heart as a wellspring of light influenced by God's love.
2. Expressing concern about the intense racial hatred between black and white individuals in America.
3. Hoping for the power of the Kingdom to bind black and white individuals in friendship and serve as a healing force.
4. Encouraging people to look beyond color and focus on the heart's condition.
5. Emphasizing that a heart filled with light is close to God, regardless of racial background.

Questions and Answers:

1. How does the letter describe the recipient in terms of their heart?

Answer: The recipient is described as having an illumined heart, akin to the pupil of the eye and a wellspring of light influenced by God's love.

2. What concern is expressed regarding racial relations in America?

Answer: The letter expresses concern about the intense racial hatred between black and white individuals in America.

3. What is the hope regarding the impact of the power of the Kingdom?

Answer: The hope is that the power of the Kingdom will bind black and white individuals in friendship and serve as a healing force.

4. What guidance does the letter offer about perception based on color?

Answer: The guidance encourages people to look beyond a person's color and focus on the condition of their heart.

5. According to the letter, what is the determining factor of one's proximity to God?

Answer: The letter emphasizes that a heart filled with light is close to God, irrespective of racial background.

– 77 –

O thou revered maidservant of God! Thy letter from Los Angeles was received. Thank divine Providence that thou hast been assisted in service and hast been the cause of the promulgation of the oneness of the world of humanity, so that the darkness of differences among men may be dissipated, and the pavilion of the unity of nations may cast its shadow over all regions. Without such unity, rest and comfort, peace and universal reconciliation are unachievable. This illumined century needeth and calleth for its fulfillment. In every century a particular and central theme is, in accordance with the requirements of that century, confirmed by God. In this illumined age that which is confirmed is the oneness of the world of humanity. Every soul who serveth this oneness will undoubtedly be assisted and confirmed.

I hope that in the assemblies thou mayest sing praises with a sweet melody and thus become the cause of joy and gladness to all.

Summary:

The letter acknowledges and expresses gratitude for the recipient's efforts in promoting the oneness of humanity, aiming to dissolve differences among people and establish unity. It highlights the significance of unity for achieving peace and reconciliation in the present era. The guidance emphasizes that serving the oneness of humanity is divinely confirmed in this century and assures assistance to those who engage in this service. The letter concludes with encouragement for the recipient to sing praises in assemblies, bringing joy and gladness to others.

Key points:

1. Acknowledging the recipient's efforts in promoting the oneness of humanity.
2. Expressing gratitude for being a cause of the dissipation of differences among people.
3. Emphasizing the importance of unity for achieving peace and reconciliation in the current age.
4. Highlighting the divine confirmation of serving the oneness of humanity in this illumined century.
5. Encouraging the recipient to sing praises in assemblies, bringing joy and gladness to others.

Questions and Answers:

1. What is the central theme emphasized in the letter?

Answer: The central theme emphasized in the letter is the oneness of the world of humanity.

2. What is acknowledged and appreciated in the recipient's efforts?

Answer: The letter acknowledges and expresses gratitude for the recipient's efforts in promoting the oneness of humanity.

3. Why is unity considered significant in the current era?

Answer: Unity is considered significant for achieving peace and reconciliation in the present era, as highlighted in the guidance.

4. According to the letter, what is divinely confirmed in the illumined century?

Answer: Serving the oneness of humanity is divinely confirmed in the illumined century, according to the guidance.

5. What encouragement is given to the recipient in the conclusion of the letter?

Answer: The recipient is encouraged to sing praises in assemblies, bringing joy and gladness to others.

O thou who art pure in heart, sanctified in spirit, peerless in character, beauteous in face! Thy photograph hath been received revealing thy physical frame in the utmost grace and the best appearance. Thou art dark in countenance and bright in character. Thou art like unto the pupil of the eye which is dark in color, yet it is the fount of light and the revealer of the contingent world.

I have not forgotten nor will I forget thee. I beseech God that He may graciously make thee the sign of His bounty amidst mankind, illumine thy face with the light of such blessings as are

vouchsafed by the merciful Lord, single thee out for His love in this age which is distinguished among all the past ages and centuries.

Summary:

The letter addresses the recipient, describing them as pure in heart, sanctified in spirit, and peerless in character. It acknowledges the receipt of the recipient's photograph, highlighting the physical grace and best appearance. The metaphor of the pupil of the eye is used to convey the idea that, despite a dark countenance, the recipient is like a source of light and revelation. The letter expresses a promise not to forget the recipient and seeks God's grace to make them a sign of divine bounty and illuminate their face with blessings.

Key points:

1. Addressing the recipient as pure in heart, sanctified in spirit, and peerless in character.
2. Acknowledging the receipt of the recipient's photograph and praising their physical grace.
3. Using the metaphor of the pupil of the eye to convey the recipient's character as a source of light and revelation.
4. Expressing the intention not to forget the recipient.
5. Seeking God's grace for the recipient to become a sign of divine bounty and be illuminated with blessings.

Questions and Answers:

1. How does the letter describe the recipient's character and appearance?

Answer: The recipient is described as pure in heart, sanctified in spirit, and peerless in character. Their photograph is acknowledged for its physical grace.

2. What metaphor is used to convey the recipient's character?

Answer: The metaphor of the pupil of the eye is used, suggesting that despite a dark countenance, the recipient is like a source of light and revelation.

3. What promise is made regarding the recipient?

Answer: The letter promises not to forget the recipient.

4. What does the letter seek from God for the recipient?

Answer: The letter seeks God's grace for the recipient to become a sign of divine bounty and be illuminated with blessings.

5. In what age is the recipient singled out for divine love, according to the letter?

Answer: The recipient is singled out for divine love in the current age, distinguished among all past ages and centuries.

O respected personage! I have read your work, *The Gospel of Wealth*,¹ and noted therein truly apposite and sound recommendations for easing the lot of humankind.

To state the matter briefly, the Teachings of Bahá'u'lláh advocate voluntary sharing, and this is a greater thing than the equalization of wealth. For equalization must be imposed from without, while sharing is a matter of free choice.

Man reacheth perfection through good deeds, voluntarily performed, not through good deeds the doing of which was forced upon him. And sharing is a personally chosen righteous act: that is, the rich should extend assistance to the poor, they should expend their substance for the poor, but of their own free will, and not because the poor have gained this end by force. For the harvest of force is turmoil and the ruin of the social order. On the other hand voluntary sharing, the freely chosen expending of one's substance, leadeth to society's comfort and peace. It lighteth up the world; it bestoweth honor upon humankind.

I have seen the good effects of your own philanthropy in America, in various universities, peace gatherings, and associations for the promotion of learning, as I travelled from city to city. Wherefore do I pray on your behalf that you shall ever be encompassed by the bounties and blessings of heaven, and shall perform many philanthropic deeds in East and West. Thus may you gleam as a lighted taper in the Kingdom of God, may attain honor and everlasting life, and shine out as a bright star on the horizon of eternity.

Summary:

The letter acknowledges the recipient's work, "The Gospel of Wealth," praising its truly apposite and sound recommendations for improving the condition of humanity. It highlights the Teachings of Bahá'u'lláh, emphasizing the advocacy of voluntary sharing over the equalization of wealth. Voluntary sharing, considered a righteous act, is encouraged as a matter of free choice, contrasting it with forced equalization. The letter notes the positive effects of the recipient's philanthropy in

various areas and expresses a prayer for the recipient to be surrounded by divine blessings, perform philanthropic deeds globally, and shine as a lighted taper in the Kingdom of God.

Key points:

1. Acknowledging the recipient's work, "The Gospel of Wealth," for its truly apposite and sound recommendations.
2. Emphasizing the Teachings of Bahá'u'lláh, which advocate voluntary sharing as superior to the equalization of wealth.
3. Describing voluntary sharing as a personally chosen righteous act and contrasting it with forced equalization.
4. Recognizing the recipient's philanthropic efforts in various areas, including universities, peace gatherings, and associations for learning.
5. Expressing a prayer for the recipient to be encompassed by divine bounties, perform philanthropic deeds globally, and shine as a lighted taper in the Kingdom of God.

Questions and Answers:

1. What does the letter praise in the recipient's work, "The Gospel of Wealth"?

Answer: The letter praises the work for its truly apposite and sound recommendations for easing the lot of humankind.

2. What is advocated by the Teachings of Bahá'u'lláh regarding wealth?

Answer: The Teachings advocate voluntary sharing as a greater concept than the equalization of wealth.

3. How does the letter describe the difference between voluntary sharing and forced equalization?

Answer: Voluntary sharing is portrayed as a personally chosen righteous act, while equalization is described as being imposed from without.

4. In what areas does the letter acknowledge the positive effects of the recipient's philanthropy?

Answer: The positive effects of the recipient's philanthropy are acknowledged in various areas, including universities, peace gatherings, and associations for learning.

5. What does the letter pray for on behalf of the recipient?

Answer: The letter prays for the recipient to be encompassed by the bounties and blessings of heaven, perform philanthropic deeds globally, and shine as a lighted taper in the Kingdom of God.

– 80 –

O thou who art turning thy face to God! Thy letter was received. From its contents it became known that thy wish is to serve the poor. What wish better than this! Those souls who are of the Kingdom eagerly wish to be of service to the poor, to sympathize with them, to show kindness to the miserable and to make their lives fruitful. Happy art thou that thou hast such a wish.

Convey on my behalf to thy two children the utmost kindness and love. Their letters have been received but, as I have no time, separate letters cannot be written at present. Show them on my behalf the utmost kindness.

Summary:

The letter commends the recipient's desire to serve the poor, expressing that there is no wish better than this. It conveys happiness for having such a noble aspiration. The letter also sends affection to the recipient's two children, acknowledging the receipt of their letters but explaining the current time constraints.

Key points:

1. Commendation for the recipient's wish to serve the poor.
2. Recognition of the noble nature of desiring to be of service to the poor and expressing happiness for having such a wish.
3. Conveying affection and love to the recipient's two children.
4. Explanation of the current time constraints preventing separate letters for each child.
5. Requesting the recipient to show, on behalf of the sender, the utmost kindness to the two children.

Questions and Answers:

1. What is the main commendation in the letter?

Answer: The letter commends the recipient for their desire to serve the poor.

2. How does the letter describe the recipient's wish to serve the poor?

Answer: The letter expresses that there is no wish better than the desire to serve the poor and that those of the Kingdom eagerly wish to be of service to the poor.

3. What does the letter convey to the recipient's two children?

Answer: The letter conveys the utmost kindness and love to the recipient's two children.

4. Why does the letter mention time constraints?

Answer: The letter mentions time constraints to explain why separate letters for each child cannot be written at present.

5. What does the letter request from the recipient regarding the two children?

Answer: The letter requests the recipient to show, on behalf of the sender, the utmost kindness to the two children.

– 81 –

Those souls who during the war have served the poor and have been in the Red Cross Mission work, their services are accepted at the Kingdom of God and are the cause of their everlasting life. Convey to them these glad tidings.

Summary:

The letter conveys glad tidings to those souls who served the poor during the war and were involved in Red Cross Mission work, stating that their services are accepted in the Kingdom of God and are the cause of their everlasting life.

Key points:

1. Recognition and acknowledgment of souls who served the poor during the war.
2. Mention of their involvement in Red Cross Mission work.
3. Conveyance of glad tidings to these souls.
4. Affirmation that their services are accepted in the Kingdom of God.
5. Declaration that their services are the cause of their everlasting life.

Questions and Answers:

1. Whom does the letter address?

Answer: The letter addresses those souls who served the poor during the war and were involved in Red Cross Mission work.

2. What is the acknowledgment regarding the mentioned souls?

Answer: The acknowledgment is that the services of the mentioned souls during the war are recognized.

3. What specific work is mentioned in which these souls were involved?

Answer: The souls were involved in Red Cross Mission work.

4. What is conveyed to these souls in the letter?

Answer: The letter conveys glad tidings to these souls.

5. According to the letter, what is the result of the services rendered by these souls?

Answer: The letter declares that the services of these souls are accepted at the Kingdom of God and are the cause of their everlasting life.

– 82 –

O thou who art firm in the Covenant, thy letter was received. Thou hast exerted a great effort for that prisoner, perchance it may prove to be fruitful. Tell him, however: “The denizens of the world are confined in the prison of nature—a prison that is continuous and eternal. If thou art at present restrained within the limits of a temporary prison, be not grieved at this; my hope is that thou mayest be emancipated from the prison of nature and may attain unto the court of everlasting life. Pray to God day and night and beg forgiveness and pardon. The omnipotence of God shall solve every difficulty.”

Summary:

The letter acknowledges the recipient's effort on behalf of a prisoner and provides a message to convey to that prisoner. It emphasizes the temporary nature of worldly confinement and

encourages the prisoner to pray for forgiveness and pardon, expressing hope for their emancipation from the prison of nature and attainment to everlasting life.

Key points:

1. Acknowledgment of the recipient's effort on behalf of a prisoner.
2. Encouragement to convey a specific message to the prisoner.
3. Emphasis on the temporary nature of worldly confinement.
4. Encouragement for the prisoner to pray for forgiveness and pardon.
5. Hope expressed for the prisoner's emancipation from the prison of nature and attainment to everlasting life.

Questions and Answers:

1. What acknowledgment does the letter make regarding the recipient?

Answer: The letter acknowledges the recipient's effort on behalf of a prisoner.

2. What message is the recipient encouraged to convey to the prisoner?

Answer: The recipient is encouraged to convey a message emphasizing the temporary nature of worldly confinement and urging the prisoner to pray for forgiveness and pardon.

3. How is the nature of worldly confinement described in the letter?

Answer: The letter describes the nature of worldly confinement as temporary.

4. What specific advice is given to the prisoner in the letter?

Answer: The prisoner is advised to pray to God day and night and seek forgiveness and pardon.

5. What is expressed as the ultimate hope for the prisoner?

Answer: The letter expresses hope for the prisoner's emancipation from the prison of nature and attainment to everlasting life.

– 83 –

Convey on behalf of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá to thy respected wife my Abhá greetings, and say: “Kindness, training and education extended to prisoners is exceedingly important. Therefore as thou hast exerted an effort in this, hast awakened some of them, and hast been the cause of the turning of their faces to the divine Kingdom, this praiseworthy deed is highly acceptable. Assuredly persevere. Convey on my behalf to the two prisoners in San Quentin the utmost kindness, and tell them: ‘That prison in the sight of wise souls is a school of training and development. Ye must strive with heart and soul that ye may become renowned in character and knowledge.’”

Summary:

The letter conveys ‘Abdu’l-Bahá's Abhá greetings to the recipient's wife and emphasizes the importance of kindness, training, and education for prisoners. It acknowledges the recipient's efforts in awakening prisoners and encouraging them to turn to the divine Kingdom. The letter encourages perseverance and delivers a message to convey the utmost kindness to two prisoners

in San Quentin. It describes the prison as a school of training and urges the prisoners to strive for renown in character and knowledge.

Key points:

1. Abhá greetings conveyed to the recipient's wife on behalf of 'Abdu'l-Bahá.
2. Emphasis on the importance of kindness, training, and education for prisoners.
3. Acknowledgment of the recipient's efforts in awakening prisoners and leading them to the divine Kingdom.
4. Encouragement for the recipient to persevere in their praiseworthy deeds.
5. Message to convey the utmost kindness to two prisoners in San Quentin.
6. Description of the prison as a school of training and development.
7. Urging the prisoners to strive for renown in character and knowledge.

Questions and Answers:

1. What greetings are conveyed to the recipient's wife on behalf of 'Abdu'l-Bahá?

Answer: Abhá greetings are conveyed to the recipient's wife on behalf of 'Abdu'l-Bahá.

2. What is emphasized regarding prisoners in the letter?

Answer: The letter emphasizes the importance of kindness, training, and education for prisoners.

3. How does the letter acknowledge the recipient's efforts?

Answer: The letter acknowledges the recipient's efforts in awakening prisoners and leading them to the divine Kingdom.

4. What encouragement is provided in the letter?

Answer: The letter encourages the recipient to persevere in their praiseworthy deeds.

5. What message is conveyed to the two prisoners in San Quentin?

Answer: The message urges the recipient to convey the utmost kindness to the two prisoners in San Quentin and encourages them to strive for renown in character and knowledge within the prison environment.

– 84 –

O thou dear handmaid of God! Thy letter hath been received, and its contents were noted.

Marriage, among the mass of the people, is a physical bond, and this union can only be temporary, since it is foredoomed to a physical separation at the close.

Among the people of Bahá, however, marriage must be a union of the body and of the spirit as well, for here both husband and wife are aglow with the same wine, both are enamored of the same matchless Face, both live and move through the same spirit, both are illumined by the same glory. This connection between them is a spiritual one, hence it is a bond that will abide forever. Likewise do they enjoy strong and lasting ties in the physical world as well, for if the marriage is based both on the spirit and the body, that union is a true one, hence it will endure. If, however, the bond is physical and nothing more, it is sure to be only temporary, and must inexorably end in separation.

When, therefore, the people of Bahá undertake to marry, the union must be a true relationship, a spiritual coming together as well as a physical one, so that throughout every phase of life, and in

all the worlds of God, their union will endure; for this real oneness is a gleaming out of the love of God.

In the same way, when any souls grow to be true believers, they will attain a spiritual relationship with one another, and show forth a tenderness which is not of this world. They will, all of them, become elated from a draught of divine love, and that union of theirs, that connection, will also abide forever. Souls, that is, who will consign their own selves to oblivion, strip from themselves the defects of humankind, and unchain themselves from human bondage, will beyond any doubt be illumined with the heavenly splendors of oneness, and will all attain unto real union in the world that dieth not.

Summary:

The letter emphasizes the significance of marriage among Bahá'ís as a union of both body and spirit. It distinguishes Bahá'í marriages from those among the general population, highlighting the spiritual bond that elevates the connection between husband and wife. The enduring nature of a Bahá'í marriage is emphasized, rooted in both the spiritual and physical aspects of the relationship. The letter suggests that true oneness in marriage is a reflection of the love of God and expresses the idea that the union will persist across various realms and phases of life. It also touches upon

the spiritual relationships formed among true believers, characterized by tenderness and a connection that transcends worldly limitations.

Key points:

1. Marriage among Bahá'ís is a union of both body and spirit.
2. Distinguishing Bahá'í marriages from those in the general population.
3. The enduring nature of Bahá'í marriages rooted in both spiritual and physical aspects.
4. True oneness in Bahá'í marriage reflects the love of God.
5. The persistence of the union across various realms and phases of life.
6. Spiritual relationships among true believers characterized by tenderness.
7. Spiritual connection that transcends worldly limitations.
8. Bahá'í souls consign themselves to oblivion, free from human bondage.
9. Illumination with the heavenly splendors of oneness in the eternal world.

Questions and Answers:

1. How does the letter describe marriage among Bahá'ís?

Answer: Marriage among Bahá'ís is described as a union of both body and spirit.

2. What distinguishes Bahá'í marriages from those in the general population?

Answer: Bahá'í marriages are distinguished by the spiritual bond that elevates the connection between husband and wife.

3. What is emphasized regarding the enduring nature of Bahá'í marriages?

Answer: The enduring nature of Bahá'í marriages is emphasized, rooted in both spiritual and physical aspects.

4. What does true oneness in Bahá'í marriage reflect?

Answer: True oneness in Bahá'í marriage reflects the love of God.

5. How is the persistence of the union described in the letter?

Answer: The letter suggests that the union will persist across various realms and phases of life, reflecting the enduring nature of Bahá'í marriages.

– 85 –

As for the question regarding marriage under the Law of God: first thou must choose one who is pleasing to thee, and then the matter is subject to the consent of father and mother. Before thou makest thy choice, they have no right to interfere.

Summary:

The passage addresses the process of marriage under the Law of God, emphasizing the individual's choice of a partner based on personal preference. It specifies that, once a choice is made, the

consent of both father and mother becomes essential, indicating a balanced approach that involves the preferences of the individual as well as familial approval.

Key points:

1. Individual choice is central to marriage under the Law of God.
2. The process begins with the individual choosing a partner who is pleasing to them.
3. The consent of both father and mother becomes a crucial factor after the individual has made their choice.
4. Emphasis on the individual's right to make their own choice before parental involvement.
5. The passage highlights a balanced approach, involving both personal preference and familial approval in the marriage process.

Questions and Answers:

1. What is the central emphasis regarding marriage under the Law of God?

Answer: The central emphasis is on individual choice in selecting a partner.

2. What is the initial step in the marriage process according to the passage?

Answer: The individual is encouraged to choose a partner who is pleasing to them.

3. When does the involvement of the father and mother become essential in the marriage process?

Answer: The involvement of the father and mother becomes essential after the individual has made their choice.

4. What right does the individual have before the involvement of parents?

Answer: The individual has the right to make their own choice before parental involvement.

5. How does the passage describe the approach to marriage under the Law of God?

Answer: The passage describes a balanced approach that involves both personal preference (individual choice) and familial approval (consent of father and mother) in the marriage process.

– 86 –

Bahá'í marriage is the commitment of the two parties one to the other, and their mutual attachment of mind and heart. Each must, however, exercise the utmost care to become thoroughly acquainted with the character of the other, that the binding covenant between them may be a tie that will endure forever. Their purpose must be this: to become loving companions and comrades and at one with each other for time and eternity....

The true marriage of Bahá'ís is this, that husband and wife should be united both physically and spiritually, that they may ever improve the spiritual life of each other, and may enjoy everlasting unity throughout all the worlds of God. This is Bahá'í marriage.

Summary:

The passage elaborates on the nature of Bahá'í marriage, emphasizing the commitment, mutual attachment, and thorough understanding of each other's character as essential elements. The purpose of Bahá'í marriage is described as becoming loving companions and comrades, united

physically and spiritually, with the aim of enhancing each other's spiritual life. The ultimate goal is to achieve everlasting unity throughout all the worlds of God.

Key points:

1. Bahá'í marriage is characterized by the commitment of the two parties to each other.
2. Mutual attachment of mind and heart is emphasized in Bahá'í marriage.
3. Thorough acquaintance with each other's character is crucial for establishing a lasting covenant.
4. The purpose of Bahá'í marriage is to become loving companions and comrades.
5. The true Bahá'í marriage involves both physical and spiritual unity, aiming for continuous improvement of the spiritual life of each partner and achieving everlasting unity.

Questions and Answers:

1. What characterizes Bahá'í marriage according to the passage?

Answer: Bahá'í marriage is characterized by the commitment of the two parties to each other, along with mutual attachment of mind and heart.

2. Why is it important for the parties in Bahá'í marriage to thoroughly understand each other's character?

Answer: Thorough understanding of each other's character is crucial for establishing a lasting covenant in Bahá'í marriage.

3. What is the purpose of Bahá'í marriage, as mentioned in the passage?

Answer: The purpose of Bahá'í marriage is to become loving companions and comrades.

4. How does the passage describe the unity in Bahá'í marriage?

Answer: Bahá'í marriage involves both physical and spiritual unity, aiming for continuous improvement of the spiritual life of each partner.

5. What is the ultimate goal of Bahá'í marriage, according to the passage?

Answer: The ultimate goal of Bahá'í marriage is to achieve everlasting unity throughout all the worlds of God.

– 87 –

O thou memento of him who died for the Blessed Beauty! In recent days, the joyful news of thy marriage to that luminous leaf hath been received, and hath infinitely gladdened the hearts of the people of God. With all humility, prayers of supplication have been offered at the Holy Threshold, that this marriage may be a harbinger of joy to the friends, that it may be a loving bond for all eternity, and yield everlasting benefits and fruits.

From separation doth every kind of hurt and harm proceed, but the union of created things doth ever yield most laudable results. From the pairing of even the smallest particles in the world of being are the grace and bounty of God made manifest; and the higher the degree, the more momentous is the union. “Glory be to Him Who hath created all the pairs, of such things as earth produceth, and out of men themselves, and of things beyond their ken.”¹ And above all other unions is that between human beings, especially when it cometh to pass in the love of God. Thus is the primal oneness made to appear; thus is laid the foundation of love in the spirit. It is certain that such a marriage as yours will cause the bestowals of God to be revealed. Wherefore do we

offer you felicitations and call down blessings upon you and beg of the Blessed Beauty, through His aid and favor, to make that wedding feast a joy to all and adorn it with the harmony of Heaven.

O my Lord, O my Lord! These two bright orbs are wedded in Thy love, conjoined in servitude to Thy Holy Threshold, united in ministering to Thy Cause. Make Thou this marriage to be as threading lights of Thine abounding grace, O my Lord, the All-Merciful, and luminous rays of Thy bestowals, O Thou the Beneficent, the Ever-Giving, that there may branch out from this great tree boughs that will grow green and flourishing through the gifts that rain down from Thy clouds of grace.

Verily Thou art the Generous, verily Thou art the Almighty, verily Thou art the Compassionate, the All-Merciful.

Summary:

The passage congratulates the recipient on their recent marriage, expressing joy and offering prayers for the union's success. It emphasizes the positive outcomes of unity, drawing parallels between the union of created things and the spiritual significance of human relationships,

particularly when rooted in the love of God. The marriage is seen as a means for the bestowals of God to be revealed, and blessings are invoked for the couple's wedding feast.

Key points:

1. Congratulatory message for the recipient's recent marriage to a "luminous leaf."
2. Expresses joy and gladness, noting that the news has infinitely gladdened the hearts of the people of God.
3. Emphasizes the positive outcomes of unity, drawing parallels with the union of created things.
4. Highlights the spiritual significance of human relationships, especially when rooted in the love of God.
5. Views the marriage as a means for the bestowals of God to be revealed, invoking blessings for the couple's wedding feast.

Questions and Answers:

1. What is the main focus of the passage?

Answer: The passage primarily focuses on congratulating the recipient on their recent marriage and expressing joy.

2. What positive outcomes of unity are emphasized in the passage?

Answer: The passage emphasizes that from unity, grace and bounty manifest, drawing parallels with the union of created things.

3. How does the passage view the spiritual significance of human relationships?

Answer: The passage views human relationships, especially in marriage, as having spiritual significance, particularly when rooted in the love of God.

4. What is seen as the outcome of the marriage in the passage?

Answer: The passage sees the marriage as a means for the bestowals of God to be revealed.

5. What blessings are invoked for the couple in the passage?

Answer: Blessings are invoked for the couple's wedding feast, asking for the marriage to be adorned with the harmony of Heaven.

– 88 –

O ye my two beloved children! The news of your union, as soon as it reached me, imparted infinite joy and gratitude. Praise be to God, those two faithful birds have sought shelter in one nest. I beseech God that He may enable them to raise an honored family, for the importance of marriage lieth in the bringing up of a richly blessed family, so that with entire gladness they may, even as candles, illuminate the world. For the enlightenment of the world dependeth upon the existence of man. If man did not exist in this world, it would have been like a tree without fruit. My hope is that you both may become even as one tree, and may, through the outpourings of the cloud of loving-kindness, acquire freshness and charm, and may blossom and yield fruit, so that your line may eternally endure.

Upon ye be the Glory of the Most Glorious.

Summary:

The passage expresses infinite joy and gratitude upon hearing the news of the union of two beloved children. It emphasizes the importance of marriage, particularly in raising a richly blessed family. The hope is for the couple to become like one tree, illuminated by the outpourings of loving-kindness, blossoming, yielding fruit, and ensuring the endurance of their line.

Key points:

1. Expresses joy and gratitude upon receiving news of the union of two beloved children.
2. Praises God for the faithful birds seeking shelter in one nest, symbolizing the couple's union.
3. Highlights the importance of marriage in bringing up a richly blessed family.
4. Describes the couple's role as candles illuminating the world, emphasizing the significance of their existence.
5. Expresses the hope for the couple to become like one tree, blossoming and yielding fruit through the outpourings of loving-kindness.

Questions and Answers:

1. What is the immediate emotional response to the news of the union in the passage?

Answer: The immediate emotional response is infinite joy and gratitude.

2. How is the union of the two beloved children symbolized in the passage?

Answer: The union is symbolized by the faithful birds seeking shelter in one nest.

3. What is emphasized as the importance of marriage in the passage?

Answer: The passage emphasizes the importance of marriage in bringing up a richly blessed family.

4. What is the role of the couple described as in the passage?

Answer: The couple's role is described as candles illuminating the world.

5. What is the hope expressed for the couple in the passage?

Answer: The hope is for the couple to become like one tree, blossoming and yielding fruit through the outpourings of loving-kindness.

O thou who art firm in the Covenant! The letter thou hadst written on 2 May 1919 was received. Praise thou God that in tests thou art firm and steadfast and art holding fast to the Abhá Kingdom. Thou art not shaken by any affliction or disturbed by any calamity. Not until man is tried doth the pure gold distinctly separate from the dross. Torment is the fire of test wherein the pure gold shineth resplendently and the impurity is burned and blackened. At present thou art, praise be to God, firm and steadfast in tests and trials and art not shaken by them.

Thy wife is not in harmony with thee, but praise be to God, the Blessed Beauty is pleased with thee and is conferring upon thee the utmost bounty and blessings. But still try to be patient with thy wife, perchance she may be transformed and her heart may be illumined. The contribution thou hast made for teaching is highly acceptable and it shall be eternally mentioned in the divine Kingdom for it is the cause of the diffusion of fragrances and the exaltation of the Word of God.

Summary:

The passage commends the recipient for their firmness and steadfastness in facing tests and trials, highlighting the metaphor of pure gold being separated from impurities through the fire of torment. Despite challenges with the recipient's wife, the letter encourages patience and expresses the Blessed Beauty's pleasure with the recipient. Additionally, the recipient's contribution to teaching is highly praised and deemed acceptable, with the assurance that it will be eternally acknowledged in the divine Kingdom for its positive impact.

Key points:

1. Commendation for the recipient's firmness and steadfastness in facing tests and trials.
2. Metaphor of pure gold being separated from impurities through the fire of torment.
3. Acknowledgment of challenges with the recipient's wife but encouragement for patience.
4. Assurance of the Blessed Beauty's pleasure with the recipient.
5. Praise and acceptance of the recipient's contribution to teaching, highlighting its positive impact.

Questions and Answers:

1. How is the recipient described in facing tests and trials in the passage?

Answer: The recipient is described as firm and steadfast in facing tests and trials.

2. What metaphor is used to depict the process of facing challenges in the passage?

Answer: The metaphor of pure gold being separated from impurities through the fire of torment is used.

3. How does the letter address the recipient's relationship challenges with their wife?

Answer: The letter acknowledges the challenges with the recipient's wife and encourages patience.

4. What is expressed regarding the Blessed Beauty's perception of the recipient?

Answer: The Blessed Beauty is expressed to be pleased with the recipient.

5. What positive acknowledgment does the letter give regarding the recipient's contribution?

Answer: The letter praises and accepts the recipient's contribution to teaching, ensuring it will be eternally acknowledged in the divine Kingdom.

– 90 –

O God, my God! This Thy handmaid is calling upon Thee, trusting in Thee, turning her face unto Thee, imploring Thee to shed Thy heavenly bounties upon her, and to disclose unto her Thy spiritual mysteries, and to cast upon her the lights of Thy Godhead.

O my Lord! Make the eyes of my husband to see. Rejoice Thou his heart with the light of the knowledge of Thee, draw Thou his mind unto Thy luminous beauty, cheer Thou his spirit by revealing unto him Thy manifest splendors.

O my Lord! Lift Thou the veil from before his sight. Rain down Thy plenteous bounties upon him, intoxicate him with the wine of love for Thee, make him one of Thy angels whose feet walk upon this earth even as their souls are soaring through the high heavens. Cause him to become a brilliant lamp, shining out with the light of Thy wisdom in the midst of Thy people.

Verily Thou art the Precious, the Ever-Bestowing, the Open of Hand.

Summary:

This prayer is a supplication to God, made by a woman on behalf of her husband. She implores God to bestow heavenly bounties upon her husband, reveal spiritual mysteries to him, and illuminate his heart and mind with the knowledge of God. The prayer seeks God's intervention to remove the veil from the husband's sight, shower him with abundant blessings, and transform him into a radiant lamp of wisdom and love. The petitioner acknowledges God as the Precious, Ever-Bestowing, and Open of Hand.

Key points:

1. A woman addresses God, expressing trust and turning to Him in prayer.
2. The prayer requests heavenly bounties, spiritual enlightenment, and the revelation of God's mysteries for the husband.
3. The petitioner seeks to bring joy to the husband's heart and draw his mind to the luminous beauty of God.
4. Specific requests include lifting the veil from the husband's sight, bestowing abundant blessings, and causing him to become a radiant lamp of wisdom.
5. The acknowledgment of God's attributes as the Precious, Ever-Bestowing, and Open of Hand.

Questions and Answers:

1. Who is the petitioner addressing in the prayer?

Answer: The woman is addressing God in her prayer.

2. What specific requests are made in the prayer regarding the husband?

Answer: Requests include heavenly bounties, spiritual enlightenment, lifting the veil from his sight, and transforming him into a radiant lamp of wisdom and love.

3. How does the petitioner describe God in the closing lines of the prayer?

Answer: God is described as the Precious, Ever-Bestowing, and Open of Hand.

4. What role does the woman hope for her husband to fulfill?

Answer: She hopes for her husband to become a brilliant lamp shining with the light of God's wisdom.

5. What emotions and qualities does the prayer seek to invoke in the husband?

Answer: The prayer seeks to invoke joy, spiritual enlightenment, love for God, and a transformation into a wise and luminous soul in the husband.

– 91 –

O thou who hast bowed thyself down in prayer before the Kingdom of God! Blessed art thou, for the beauty of the divine Countenance hath enraptured thy heart, and the light of inner wisdom hath filled it full, and within it shineth the brightness of the Kingdom. Know thou that God is with thee under all conditions, and that He guardeth thee from the changes and chances of this world and hath made thee a handmaid in His mighty vineyard....

As to thy respected husband: it is incumbent upon thee to treat him with great kindness, to consider his wishes and be conciliatory with him at all times, till he seeth that because thou hast

directed thyself toward the Kingdom of God, thy tenderness for him and thy love for God have but increased, as well as thy concern for his wishes under all conditions.

I beg of the Almighty to keep thee firmly established in His love, and ever shedding abroad the sweet breaths of holiness in all those regions.

Summary:

The passage addresses someone who has devoted themselves to prayer before the Kingdom of God. It emphasizes the blessedness of the individual and their connection with God. The advice is given to treat the husband with kindness and consideration, aligning personal actions with a devotion to the Kingdom of God.

Key Points:

1. Opening with a blessing for someone devoted to prayer before the Kingdom of God.
2. Acknowledgment of the enraptured heart and inner wisdom filled with the divine light.
3. Assurance that God is with the person under all conditions, guarding them in life's uncertainties.
4. Recognition of the individual's role as a handmaid in God's mighty vineyard.
5. Specific guidance on treating the husband with kindness, considering his wishes, and being conciliatory.

Questions and Answers:

1. Q: What is the individual blessed for in the passage?

A: The individual is blessed for bowing down in prayer before the Kingdom of God.

2. Q: What does the passage emphasize about the person's connection with God?

A: It emphasizes that the divine Countenance has enraptured their heart, and inner wisdom is filled with the light of the Kingdom.

3. Q: What role is attributed to God in the individual's life according to the passage?

A: God is seen as being with the individual under all conditions, guarding them from life's changes and chances.

4. Q: What specific advice is given regarding the treatment of the husband?

A: The advice is to treat the husband with great kindness, consider his wishes, and be conciliatory at all times.

5. Q: How is the individual encouraged to express their devotion to God?

A: By directing oneself toward the Kingdom of God, increasing tenderness and love for God, and showing concern for the husband's wishes under all conditions.

O ye two believers in God! The Lord, peerless is He, hath made woman and man to abide with each other in the closest companionship, and to be even as a single soul. They are two helpmates, two intimate friends, who should be concerned about the welfare of each other.

If they live thus, they will pass through this world with perfect contentment, bliss, and peace of heart, and become the object of divine grace and favor in the Kingdom of heaven. But if they do

other than this, they will live out their lives in great bitterness, longing at every moment for death, and will be shamefaced in the heavenly realm.

Strive, then, to abide, heart and soul, with each other as two doves in the nest, for this is to be blessed in both worlds.

Summary:

The passage emphasizes the divine design of companionship between man and woman, describing them as two helpmates and intimate friends who should be concerned about each other's welfare. Living in harmony leads to contentment, bliss, and divine favor. On the contrary, a life apart from this harmonious companionship results in bitterness and longing for death.

Key Points:

1. Introduction to the divine purpose of bringing man and woman together in the closest companionship.
2. Description of the ideal relationship as that of two helpmates and intimate friends.
3. Emphasis on mutual concern for each other's welfare as the key to contentment and peace of heart.
4. Promise of divine grace and favor in the Kingdom of heaven for those who live in harmony.
5. Warning of a bitter and regretful life for those who deviate from the prescribed companionship.

Questions and Answers:

1. Q: According to the passage, what is the divine purpose behind bringing man and woman together?

A: The divine purpose is for them to abide in the closest companionship and be as a single soul.

2. Q: How does the passage describe the ideal relationship between man and woman?

A: It describes them as two helpmates and intimate friends who should be concerned about each other's welfare.

3. Q: What are the promised outcomes for those who live in harmony, as mentioned in the passage?

A: They will experience perfect contentment, bliss, and peace of heart, becoming the object of divine grace and favor in the Kingdom of heaven.

4. Q: What consequences are mentioned for those who do not live in harmony as described?

A: They will live out their lives in great bitterness, longing for death, and will be shamefaced in the heavenly realm.

5. Q: How does the passage advise believers to live with each other for blessings in both worlds?

A: They are advised to abide, heart and soul, with each other as two doves in the nest.

O thou maidservant of God! Every woman who becometh the maidservant of God outshineth in glory the empresses of the world, for she is related to God, and her sovereignty is everlasting, whereas a handful of dust will obliterate the name and fame of those empresses. In other words, as soon as they go down to the grave they are reduced to naught. The maidservants of God's

Kingdom, on the other hand, enjoy eternal sovereignty unaffected by the passing of ages and generations.

Consider how many empresses have come and gone since the time of Christ. Each was the ruler of a country but now all trace and name of them is lost, while Mary Magdalene, who was only a peasant and a maidservant of God, still shineth from the horizon of everlasting glory. Strive thou, therefore, to remain the maidservant of God.

Thou hast praised the Convention. This Convention shall acquire great importance in future, for it is serving the divine Kingdom and the world of mankind. It promulgateth universal peace and layeth the basis of the oneness of mankind; it freeth the souls from religious, racial and worldly prejudices and gathereth them under the shade of the one-colored pavilion of God. Praise thou God, therefore, that thou hast attended such a Convention and hast listened to the divine Teachings.

Summary:

The passage exalts the status of women who become maidservants of God, stating that they surpass worldly empresses in glory due to their eternal sovereignty. It contrasts the fleeting fame of empresses with the enduring glory of those devoted to God's Kingdom. The maidservants of God are portrayed as enjoying everlasting sovereignty, unaffected by the passage of time. The advice is to strive to remain a maidservant of God. Additionally, the passage praises a Convention for its

role in promoting universal peace, establishing the oneness of mankind, and breaking down religious, racial, and worldly prejudices.

Key Points:

1. Introduction highlighting the elevated status of women who become maidservants of God.
2. Assertion of their surpassing glory compared to worldly empresses, emphasizing their eternal sovereignty.
3. Illustration of the transient nature of empresses' fame and the enduring shine of maidservants of God.
4. Encouragement to strive to remain devoted to God and be a maidservant of His Kingdom.
5. Recognition and praise for a Convention serving the divine Kingdom and promoting universal peace, oneness of mankind, and the elimination of prejudices.

Questions and Answers:

1. Q: According to the passage, what distinguishes the glory of women who become maidservants of God from worldly empresses?

A: The maidservants of God enjoy eternal sovereignty, whereas empresses' fame is fleeting and obliterated by time.

2. Q: How does the passage illustrate the enduring glory of a maidservant of God using the example of Mary Magdalene?

A: Mary Magdalene, a peasant and maidservant of God, still shines from the horizon of everlasting glory, while empresses' names are lost after death.

3. Q: What advice is given in the passage regarding one's devotion to God?

A: The advice is to strive to remain the maidservant of God.

4. Q: What significant role does the passage attribute to the mentioned Convention?

A: The Convention is praised for serving the divine Kingdom, promoting universal peace, establishing the oneness of mankind, and breaking down prejudices.

5. Q: What is the overarching theme of the passage regarding the status of those devoted to God?

A: The passage emphasizes the enduring sovereignty and glory of maidservants of God in contrast to the transient nature of worldly empresses.

– 94 –

O handmaids of the beauty of Abhá! Your letter hath come, and its perusal brought great joy. Praised be God, the women believers have organized meetings where they will learn how to teach the Faith, will spread the sweet savors of the Teachings and make plans for training the children.

This gathering must be completely spiritual. That is, the discussions must be confined to marshalling clear and conclusive proofs that the Sun of Truth hath indeed arisen. And further, those present should concern themselves with every means of training the girl children; with teaching the various branches of knowledge, good behavior, a proper way of life, the cultivation of a good character, chastity and constancy, perseverance, strength, determination, firmness of purpose; with household management, the education of children, and whatever especially applieth to the needs of girls—to the end that these girls, reared in the stronghold of all perfections, and

with the protection of a goodly character, will, when they themselves become mothers, bring up their children from earliest infancy to have a good character and conduct themselves well.

Let them also study whatever will nurture the health of the body and its physical soundness, and how to guard their children from disease.

When matters are thus well arranged, every child will become a peerless plant in the gardens of the Abhá Paradise.

Summary:

The passage acknowledges the joy brought by a letter from the Handmaids of the beauty of Abhá. It praises the organization of meetings for women believers to learn and teach the Faith, spread the Teachings, and plan for children's training. The gatherings are emphasized to be completely spiritual, focusing on proving the truth of the Faith and training girl children in various aspects,

including knowledge, behavior, character, and health. The goal is to nurture girls in the stronghold of perfections, enabling them to raise their children with good character and well-being.

Key Points:

1. Acknowledgment of joy upon receiving a letter from the Handmaids of the beauty of Abhá.
2. Praise for the organization of meetings for women believers to learn, teach the Faith, and plan children's training.
3. Emphasis on keeping the gatherings completely spiritual, focusing on proving the truth of the Faith.
4. Importance placed on training girl children in various aspects such as knowledge, behavior, character, and health.
5. Goal of nurturing girls to become mothers who can raise their children with good character and physical well-being.

Questions and Answers:

1. Q: What brings joy according to the passage, and to whom is it addressed?

A: The letter from the Handmaids of the beauty of Abhá brings joy, and it is addressed to the women believers.

2. Q: What is the main focus of the gatherings organized for women believers?

A: The main focus is on learning how to teach the Faith, spreading the Teachings, and planning for the training of children.

3. Q: How does the passage describe the nature of the gatherings?

A: The gatherings are to be completely spiritual, with discussions focused on marshalling clear proofs of the truth of the Faith.

4. Q: What aspects of training are highlighted for girl children in the passage?

A: Training includes various branches of knowledge, good behavior, a proper way of life, cultivation of character, chastity, constancy, perseverance, strength, determination, and household management.

5. Q: What is the ultimate goal mentioned in the passage regarding the upbringing of children?

A: The goal is to nurture children in the stronghold of all perfections so that they become peerless plants in the gardens of the Abhá Paradise.

O handmaids of the Lord! The spiritual assemblage that ye established in that illumined city is most propitious. Ye have made great strides; ye have surpassed the others, have arisen to serve the Holy Threshold, and have won heavenly bestowals. Now with all spiritual zeal must ye gather in that enlightened assemblage and recite the Holy Writings and engage in remembering the Lord. Set ye forth His arguments and proofs. Work ye for the guidance of the women in that land, teach the young girls and the children, so that the mothers may educate their little ones from their earliest days, thoroughly train them, rear them to have a goodly character and good morals, guide them to all the virtues of humankind, prevent the development of any behavior that would be worthy of blame, and foster them in the embrace of Bahá'í education. Thus shall these tender infants be

nurtured at the breast of the knowledge of God and His love. Thus shall they grow and flourish, and be taught righteousness and the dignity of humankind, resolution and the will to strive and to endure. Thus shall they learn perseverance in all things, the will to advance, high-mindedness and high resolve, chastity and purity of life. Thus shall they be enabled to carry to a successful conclusion whatsoever they undertake.

Let the mothers consider that whatever concerneth the education of children is of the first importance. Let them put forth every effort in this regard, for when the bough is green and tender it will grow in whatever way ye train it. Therefore is it incumbent upon the mothers to rear their little ones even as a gardener tendeth his young plants. Let them strive by day and by night to establish within their children faith and certitude, the fear of God, the love of the Beloved of the worlds, and all good qualities and traits. Whensoever a mother seeth that her child hath done well, let her praise and applaud him and cheer his heart; and if the slightest undesirable trait should manifest itself, let her counsel the child and punish him, and use means based on reason, even a slight verbal chastisement should this be necessary. It is not, however, permissible to strike a child, or vilify him, for the child's character will be totally perverted if he be subjected to blows or verbal abuse.

Summary:

The passage commends the spiritual assemblage established by the Handmaids of the Lord, praising their progress and heavenly bestowals. It urges them to continue gathering, reciting Holy Writings, and serving the Holy Threshold. Special emphasis is placed on guiding women, teaching young girls and children, and ensuring the mothers educate their little ones. The importance of Bahá'í education is stressed, promoting the virtues of humanity, preventing undesirable behavior, and fostering a foundation in the knowledge of God. Mothers are advised to prioritize the education

of their children, using praise and reason for encouragement and guidance, while avoiding physical punishment.

Key Points:

1. Commendation for the established spiritual assemblage, praising progress and heavenly bestowals.
2. Encouragement to continue gathering, reciting Holy Writings, and serving the Holy Threshold.
3. Emphasis on guiding women, teaching young girls and children, and ensuring mothers educate their little ones.
4. Stress on the importance of Bahá'í education, promoting virtues, preventing undesirable behavior, and nurturing knowledge of God.
5. Advice to mothers on prioritizing the education of children, using praise and reason for encouragement, and avoiding physical punishment.

Questions and Answers:

1. Q: What is commended in the passage, and who is addressed?

A: The spiritual assemblage established by the Handmaids of the Lord is commended, and the Handmaids of the Lord are addressed.

2. Q: What specific tasks are urged upon the Handmaids of the Lord in the passage?

A: They are urged to gather, recite Holy Writings, serve the Holy Threshold, guide women, teach young girls and children, and ensure mothers educate their little ones.

3. Q: What is the emphasized goal of Bahá'í education mentioned in the passage?

A: The goal is to nurture tender infants at the breast of the knowledge of God and His love, enabling them to grow, flourish, and be taught righteousness and the dignity of humankind.

4. Q: What advice is given to mothers regarding the education of their children?

A: Mothers are advised to strive day and night to establish faith, certitude, the fear of God, love for the Beloved of the worlds, and all good qualities and traits within their children.

5. Q: What approach does the passage recommend for mothers when undesirable traits manifest in their children?

A: Mothers are advised to counsel the child, punish if necessary using means based on reason, and avoid physical punishment or vilification, as it may pervert the child's character.

– 96 –

O handmaids of the Merciful! Render ye thanks unto the Ancient Beauty that ye have been raised up and gathered together in this mightiest of centuries, this most illumined of ages. As befitting thanks for such a bounty, stand ye staunch and strong in the Covenant and, following the precepts of God and the holy Law, suckle your children from their infancy with the milk of a universal education, and rear them so that from their earliest days, within their inmost heart, their very nature, a way of life will be firmly established that will conform to the divine Teachings in all things.

For mothers are the first educators, the first mentors; and truly it is the mothers who determine the happiness, the future greatness, the courteous ways and learning and judgment, the understanding and the faith of their little ones.

Summary:

The passage expresses gratitude to the Ancient Beauty for the gathering of the Handmaids of the Merciful in this mighty century. It calls for steadfastness in the Covenant and emphasizes the importance of universal education for children from infancy. Mothers are acknowledged as the first educators and mentors, with the responsibility of shaping the happiness, greatness, courteous ways, learning, judgment, understanding, and faith of their children.

Key Points:

1. Expression of thanks to the Ancient Beauty for the gathering of the Handmaids of the Merciful in a significant century.
2. Call for steadfastness in the Covenant and adherence to the precepts of God and the holy Law.
3. Emphasis on providing universal education to children from infancy, conforming to divine Teachings.
4. Recognition of mothers as the first educators and mentors with a crucial role in shaping various aspects of their children's lives.
5. Acknowledgment of the responsibility mothers have in determining the happiness, greatness, and overall development of their children.

Questions and Answers:

1. Q: What is the gratitude expressed for in the passage?

A: Gratitude is expressed for the gathering of the Handmaids of the Merciful in this mighty century.

2. Q: What is the call given to the Handmaids of the Merciful regarding the Covenant?

A: The call is to stand staunch and strong in the Covenant and follow the precepts of God and the holy Law.

3. Q: What is emphasized regarding the education of children in the passage?

A: There is an emphasis on providing children with universal education from their infancy, conforming to divine Teachings.

4. Q: According to the passage, who plays a crucial role in shaping various aspects of children's lives?

A: Mothers are acknowledged as the first educators and mentors, playing a crucial role in shaping their children's lives.

5. Q: What responsibilities are attributed to mothers in the passage?

A: Mothers are attributed the responsibility of determining the happiness, future greatness, courteous ways, learning, judgment, understanding, and faith of their children.

There are certain pillars which have been established as the unshakable supports of the Faith of God. The mightiest of these is learning and the use of the mind, the expansion of consciousness, and insight into the realities of the universe and the hidden mysteries of Almighty God.

To promote knowledge is thus an inescapable duty imposed on every one of the friends of God. It is incumbent upon that Spiritual Assembly, that assemblage of God, to exert every effort to educate the children, so that from infancy they will be trained in Bahá'í conduct and the ways of God, and will, even as young plants, thrive and flourish in the soft-flowing waters that are the counsels and admonitions of the Blessed Beauty.

Summary:

The passage identifies pillars supporting the Faith of God, with learning and the use of the mind as the mightiest. It emphasizes the duty of promoting knowledge and highlights the role of Spiritual Assemblies in educating children. The goal is to train children in Bahá'í conduct and the ways of God from infancy, allowing them to thrive in the soft-flowing waters of the counsels and admonitions of the Blessed Beauty.

Key Points:

1. Introduction of certain pillars as unshakable supports of the Faith of God.
2. Identification of learning and the use of the mind as the mightiest pillar.
3. Emphasis on the duty of promoting knowledge for every friend of God.
4. Recognition of the responsibility of Spiritual Assemblies to exert efforts in educating children.
5. Goal of training children in Bahá'í conduct and the ways of God from infancy.

Questions and Answers:

1. Q: What is considered the mightiest pillar supporting the Faith of God in the passage?

A: Learning and the use of the mind are considered the mightiest pillars supporting the Faith of God.

2. Q: What duty is imposed on every friend of God according to the passage?

A: Every friend of God is duty-bound to promote knowledge.

3. Q: What role is emphasized for Spiritual Assemblies in the passage?

A: Spiritual Assemblies are emphasized to exert every effort in educating children.

4. Q: What specific goal is mentioned in training children according to the passage?

A: The goal is to train children in Bahá'í conduct and the ways of God from infancy.

5. Q: How are children expected to thrive, as per the passage?

A: Children are expected to thrive in the soft-flowing waters of the counsels and admonitions of the Blessed Beauty.

Were there no educator, all souls would remain savage, and were it not for the teacher, the children would be ignorant creatures.

It is for this reason that, in this new cycle, education and training are recorded in the Book of God as obligatory and not voluntary. That is, it is enjoined upon the father and mother, as a duty, to strive with all effort to train the daughter and the son, to nurse them from the breast of knowledge and to rear them in the bosom of sciences and arts. Should they neglect this matter, they shall be held responsible and worthy of reproach in the presence of the stern Lord.

Summary:

The passage highlights the crucial role of educators and teachers in civilizing souls and preventing ignorance in children. It emphasizes that, in the new cycle, education and training are obligatory duties enjoined upon parents. The duty of parents is to strive with all effort to educate and train their children in the sciences and arts, and neglecting this responsibility is deemed worthy of reproach.

Key Points:

1. Recognition of educators preventing souls from remaining savage and teachers preventing ignorance in children.
2. Declaration that education and training are obligatory, not voluntary, in the new cycle.
3. Enjoins parents, as a duty, to strive to train and educate their daughters and sons.
4. Emphasis on nursing children from the breast of knowledge and rearing them in the bosom of sciences and arts.
5. Consequences of neglecting the duty of education and training are highlighted, making parents responsible and subject to reproach in the presence of the stern Lord.

Questions and Answers:

1. Q: What roles are attributed to educators and teachers in the passage?

A: Educators prevent souls from remaining savage, and teachers prevent ignorance in children.

2. Q: How is education and training described in the new cycle according to the passage?

A: Education and training are described as obligatory, not voluntary, in the new cycle.

3. Q: What duty is enjoined upon parents in the passage?

A: Parents are enjoined, as a duty, to strive with all effort to train and educate their daughters and sons.

4. Q: What metaphor is used to describe the process of educating children?

A: The metaphor of nursing children from the breast of knowledge and rearing them in the bosom of sciences and arts is used.

5. Q: What are the consequences mentioned for neglecting the duty of education and training?

A: Neglecting the duty of education and training makes parents responsible and subject to reproach in the presence of the stern Lord.

Thou didst write as to the children: from the very beginning, the children must receive divine education and must continually be reminded to remember their God. Let the love of God pervade their inmost being, commingled with their mother's milk.

Summary:

The passage emphasizes the importance of providing divine education to children from the very beginning. It suggests a continuous reminder for children to remember God, advocating for the infusion of the love of God into their beings, akin to being commingled with their mother's milk.

Key Points:

1. Importance of providing divine education to children from the very beginning.
2. Emphasis on the continuous reminder for children to remember God.
3. Suggestion to let the love of God pervade the inmost being of children.
4. Metaphorical expression of the love of God being commingled with the mother's milk.

Questions and Answers:

1. Q: What is the primary focus of the passage regarding children?

A: The primary focus is on providing children with divine education from the very beginning.

2. Q: What aspect of the children's upbringing does the passage highlight for continuous attention?

A: The passage highlights the need for a continuous reminder for children to remember God.

3. Q: How is the love of God suggested to be integrated into the children's beings?

A: The love of God is suggested to pervade the inmost being of children.

4. Q: What metaphor is used in the passage to express the integration of the love of God?

A: The metaphor used is the commingling of the love of God with the mother's milk.

5. Q: What is the implied idea regarding the timing of introducing divine education to children?

A: The implied idea is to introduce divine education to children from the very beginning, suggesting its importance from early stages.

– 100 –

My wish is that these children should receive a Bahá'í education, so that they may progress both here and in the Kingdom, and rejoice thy heart.

In a time to come, morals will degenerate to an extreme degree. It is essential that children be reared in the Bahá'í way, that they may find happiness both in this world and the next. If not, they shall be beset by sorrows and troubles, for human happiness is founded upon spiritual behavior.

Summary:

The passage expresses the desire for children to receive a Bahá'í education to ensure their progress in both this world and the Kingdom. It forewarns of a future time when morals will degenerate,

emphasizing the importance of raising children in the Bahá'í way for their happiness in this world and the next. The foundation of human happiness is identified as spiritual behavior.

Key Points:

1. Desire for children to receive a Bahá'í education for progress in this world and the Kingdom.
2. Warning about the future degeneration of morals to an extreme degree.
3. Emphasis on raising children in the Bahá'í way to ensure their happiness.
4. Recognition that human happiness is founded upon spiritual behavior.

Questions and Answers:

1. Q: What is the expressed wish regarding the education of children in the passage?
A: The expressed wish is for children to receive a Bahá'í education for progress in both this world and the Kingdom.
2. Q: What future scenario is forewarned in the passage?
A: The passage forewarns of a time when morals will degenerate to an extreme degree.
3. Q: Why does the passage emphasize raising children in the Bahá'í way?
A: Raising children in the Bahá'í way is emphasized to ensure their happiness both in this world and the next.
4. Q: What consequence is mentioned if children are not raised in the Bahá'í way?
A: The consequence mentioned is that children shall be beset by sorrows and troubles if not raised in the Bahá'í way.
5. Q: According to the passage, what is identified as the foundation of human happiness?
A: The foundation of human happiness is identified as spiritual behavior.

– 101 –

O ye who have peace of soul! Among the divine Texts as set forth in the Most Holy Book and also in other Tablets is this: it is incumbent upon the father and mother to train their children both in good conduct and the study of books; study, that is, to the degree required, so that no child, whether girl or boy, will remain illiterate. Should the father fail in his duty he must be compelled to discharge his responsibility, and should he be unable to comply, let the House of Justice take over the education of the children; in no case is a child to be left without an education. This is one of the stringent and inescapable commandments to neglect which would draw down the wrathful indignation of Almighty God.

Summary:

The passage emphasizes the responsibility of parents, especially fathers, to train their children both in good conduct and the study of books. It stresses the importance of ensuring that no child, whether girl or boy, remains illiterate. If a father fails in this duty, there is an obligation to compel

him to fulfill it. If he cannot comply, the House of Justice should take over the education of the children, and under no circumstances should a child be left without an education.

Key Points:

1. The divine Texts emphasize the responsibility of parents to train children in good conduct and the study of books.
2. The obligation to ensure that no child remains illiterate, irrespective of gender.
3. The responsibility of fathers, with a directive to compel them to fulfill their duty if they fail.
4. If a father cannot comply, the House of Justice is to take over the education of the children.
5. A strong and inescapable commandment emphasizing that no child should be left without an education.

Questions and Answers:

1. Q: What is the dual responsibility emphasized for parents in the passage?

A: Parents are emphasized to train their children both in good conduct and the study of books.

2. Q: What is stressed regarding the literacy of children in the passage?

A: It is stressed that no child, whether girl or boy, should remain illiterate.

3. Q: What is the directive if a father fails in his duty of educating the children?

A: If a father fails, he must be compelled to discharge his responsibility.

4. Q: What is the suggested course of action if a father cannot comply with the duty of educating children?

A: If a father cannot comply, the House of Justice should take over the education of the children.

5. Q: What is emphasized as one of the stringent and inescapable commandments in the passage?

A: The commandment that no child should be left without an education is emphasized as stringent and inescapable.

– 102 –

O true companions! All humankind are as children in a school, and the Dawning-Points of Light, the Sources of divine revelation, are the teachers, wondrous and without peer. In the school of realities they educate these sons and daughters, according to teachings from God, and foster them in the bosom of grace, so that they may develop along every line, show forth the excellent gifts and blessings of the Lord, and combine human perfections; that they may advance in all aspects of human endeavor, whether outward or inward, hidden or visible, material or spiritual, until they make of this mortal world a widespread mirror, to reflect that other world which dieth not.

O ye friends of God! Because, in this most momentous of ages, the Sun of Truth hath risen at the highest point of the spring equinox, and cast its rays on every clime, it shall kindle such tremulous excitement, it shall release such vibrations in the world of being, it shall stimulate such growth and development, it shall stream out with such a glory of light, and clouds of grace shall pour down such plentiful waters, and fields and plains shall teem with such a galaxy of sweet-smelling plants and blooms, that this lowly earth will become the Abhá Kingdom, and this nether world the world above. Then will this fleck of dust be as the vast circle of the skies, this human

place the palace-court of God, this spot of clay the dayspring of the endless favors of the Lord of Lords.

Wherefore, O loved ones of God! Make ye a mighty effort till you yourselves betoken this advancement and all these confirmations, and become focal centers of God's blessings, daysprings of the light of His unity, promoters of the gifts and graces of civilized life. Be ye in that land vanguards of the perfections of humankind; carry forward the various branches of knowledge, be active and progressive in the field of inventions and the arts. Endeavor to rectify the conduct of men, and seek to excel the whole world in moral character. While the children are yet in their infancy feed them from the breast of heavenly grace, foster them in the cradle of all excellence, rear them in the embrace of bounty. Give them the advantage of every useful kind of knowledge. Let them share in every new and rare and wondrous craft and art. Bring them up to work and strive, and accustom them to hardship. Teach them to dedicate their lives to matters of great import, and inspire them to undertake studies that will benefit mankind.

Summary:

The passage likens humankind to children in a school, with divine revelations as wondrous teachers. It emphasizes the education in the school of realities, fostering sons and daughters according to God's teachings. The goal is for individuals to develop along every line, combining human perfections and reflecting the immortal world. The passage further speaks of the transformative power of the Sun of Truth in this significant age, stimulating growth, and turning the earth into the Abhá Kingdom. It calls on the friends of God to be vanguards of human

perfections, active in various fields, striving for moral excellence, and nurturing the next generation in knowledge, excellence, and dedication to benefiting mankind.

Key Points:

1. Humankind likened to children in a school, with divine revelations as teachers.
2. Emphasis on education in the school of realities based on teachings from God.
3. Goal for individuals to develop along every line, combining human perfections.
4. The transformative power of the Sun of Truth in this significant age.
5. Call for the friends of God to be vanguards of human perfections, active in various fields, and dedicated to benefiting mankind.

Questions and Answers:

1. Q: How does the passage describe humankind in relation to divine revelations?
A: Humankind is likened to children in a school, and divine revelations are described as wondrous and peerless teachers.
2. Q: What is the goal for individuals according to the passage?
A: The goal is for individuals to develop along every line, showing forth the excellent gifts and blessings of the Lord.
3. Q: How does the passage characterize the transformative power of the Sun of Truth in this age?
A: The Sun of Truth in this momentous age is described as casting its rays on every clime, kindling tremulous excitement, releasing vibrations, stimulating growth, and turning the earth into the Abhá Kingdom.
4. Q: What is the role prescribed for the friends of God in the passage?
A: The friends of God are called to be vanguards of human perfections, active in various fields, and dedicated to benefiting mankind.
5. Q: What instructions are given for nurturing the next generation according to the passage?
A: The passage instructs to feed children from the breast of heavenly grace, foster them in the cradle of all excellence, rear them in the embrace of bounty, and provide them with every useful kind of knowledge and skills.

– 103 –

The education and training of children is among the most meritorious acts of humankind and draweth down the grace and favor of the All-Merciful, for education is the indispensable foundation of all human excellence and alloweth man to work his way to the heights of abiding glory. If a child be trained from his infancy, he will, through the loving care of the Holy Gardener, drink in the crystal waters of the spirit and of knowledge, like a young tree amid the rilling brooks. And certainly he will gather to himself the bright rays of the Sun of Truth, and through its light and heat will grow ever fresh and fair in the garden of life.

Therefore must the mentor be a doctor as well: that is, he must, in instructing the child, remedy its faults; must give him learning, and at the same time rear him to have a spiritual nature. Let the teacher be a doctor to the character of the child, thus will he heal the spiritual ailments of the children of men.

If, in this momentous task, a mighty effort be exerted, the world of humanity will shine out with other adornings, and shed the fairest light. Then will this darksome place grow luminous, and this abode of earth turn into Heaven. The very demons will change to angels then, and wolves to shepherds of the flock, and the wild-dog pack to gazelles that pasture on the plains of oneness, and ravening beasts to peaceful herds, and birds of prey, with talons sharp as knives, to songsters warbling their sweet native notes.

For the inner reality of man is a demarcation line between the shadow and the light, a place where the two seas meet;¹ it is the lowest point on the arc of descent,² and therefore is it capable of gaining all the grades above. With education it can achieve all excellence; devoid of education it will stay on, at the lowest point of imperfection.

Every child is potentially the light of the world—and at the same time its darkness; wherefore must the question of education be accounted as of primary importance. From his infancy, the child must be nursed at the breast of God's love, and nurtured in the embrace of His knowledge, that he may radiate light, grow in spirituality, be filled with wisdom and learning, and take on the characteristics of the angelic host.

Since ye have been assigned to this holy task, ye must therefore exert every effort to make that school famed in all respects throughout the world; to make it the cause of exalting the Word of the Lord.

Summary:

The passage highlights the significance of the education and training of children as a meritorious act, drawing down the grace and favor of the All-Merciful. Education is presented as the indispensable foundation for human excellence, allowing individuals to attain abiding glory. The mentor is likened to a doctor, instructed to remedy faults, impart learning, and nurture a spiritual nature. The transformative potential of education is emphasized, envisioning a world adorned with light and positive transformation. The inner reality of man is portrayed as a demarcation line capable of achieving all grades of excellence through education. The passage stresses the

importance of nurturing children from infancy with God's love and knowledge to radiate light and embody angelic characteristics.

Key Points:

1. The education and training of children as a meritorious act drawing divine favor.
2. Education as the indispensable foundation for human excellence and abiding glory.
3. The mentor's role likened to that of a doctor, addressing faults and nurturing a spiritual nature.
4. Envisioning a transformed world with positive adornings and illumination.
5. The transformative potential of education on the inner reality of man, capable of achieving all grades of excellence.
6. Emphasizing the importance of nurturing children from infancy with God's love and knowledge.
7. Exhortation to make the assigned school renowned worldwide and a cause for exalting the Word of the Lord.

Questions and Answers:

1. Q: What is the significance of the education and training of children according to the passage?
A: It is among the most meritorious acts, drawing down the grace and favor of the All-Merciful.
2. Q: How is the mentor's role described in educating children?
A: The mentor is likened to a doctor, addressing faults, imparting learning, and nurturing a spiritual nature.
3. Q: What is the envisioned outcome of a mighty effort in education?
A: The envisioned outcome is a transformed world adorned with light and positive adornings.
4. Q: How is the inner reality of man characterized in the passage?
A: The inner reality of man is described as a demarcation line capable of achieving all grades of excellence through education.
5. Q: What is the recommended approach to nurturing children from infancy?
A: Children should be nurtured from infancy with God's love and knowledge to radiate light and embody angelic characteristics.

– 104 –

O loved ones of God and handmaids of the Merciful! A large body of scholars is of the opinion that variations among minds and differing degrees of perception are due to differences in education, training and culture. That is, they believe that minds are equal to begin with, but that training and education will result in mental variations and differing levels of intelligence, and that such variations are not an inherent component of the individuality but are the result of education: that no one hath any inborn superiority over another....

The Manifestations of God are likewise in agreement with the view that education exerteth the strongest possible influence on humankind. They affirm, however, that differences in the level of intelligence are innate; and this fact is obvious, and not worth debating. For we see that children of the same age, the same country, the same race, indeed of the same family, and trained by the same individual, still are different as to the degree of their comprehension and intelligence. One will make rapid progress, one will receive instruction only gradually, one will remain at the lowest

stage of all. For no matter how much you may polish a shell, it will not turn into a gleaming pearl, nor can you change a dull pebble into a gem whose pure rays will light the world. Never, through training and cultivation, will the colocynth and the bitter tree¹ change into the Tree of Blessedness.² That is to say, education cannot alter the inner essence of a man, but it doth exert tremendous influence, and with this power it can bring forth from the individual whatever perfections and capacities are deposited within him. A grain of wheat, when cultivated by the farmer, will yield a whole harvest, and a seed, through the gardener's care, will grow into a great tree. Thanks to a teacher's loving efforts, the children of the primary school may reach the highest levels of achievement; indeed, his benefactions may lift some child of small account to an exalted throne. Thus is it clearly demonstrated that by their essential nature, minds vary as to their capacity, while education also playeth a great role and exerteth a powerful effect on their development.

Summary:

The passage discusses the views on the variations in minds and intelligence, with one perspective attributing differences to education and training and another recognizing innate differences. The Manifestations of God affirm the influence of education but emphasize the innate differences in intelligence. The analogy of polishing a shell and transforming a colocynth into the Tree of Blessedness is used to illustrate that education cannot change the inner essence of a person but can

bring forth their deposited perfections and capacities. The passage acknowledges that minds vary in capacity by their essential nature, and education plays a significant role in their development.

Key Points:

1. Differences in minds and intelligence are attributed to education, training, and culture by some scholars.
2. The Manifestations of God acknowledge the influence of education but assert innate differences in intelligence.
3. Children of the same age, country, race, and family, trained by the same individual, still show differences in comprehension and intelligence.
4. Education is described as having a tremendous influence and the power to bring forth individual perfections and capacities.
5. The analogy of polishing a shell and transforming a colocynth into the Tree of Blessedness illustrates the limits of education in changing the inner essence of a person.
6. Minds vary in capacity by their essential nature, and education plays a significant role in their development.

Questions and Answers:

1. Q: What is the opinion of some scholars regarding variations in minds and intelligence?

A: Some scholars attribute variations to differences in education, training, and culture.

2. Q: What do the Manifestations of God affirm about the influence of education?

A: The Manifestations of God affirm that education has a strong influence, but innate differences in intelligence are also acknowledged.

3. Q: Despite similar backgrounds, why do children show differences in comprehension and intelligence?

A: Even with the same age, country, race, and family, children may show differences due to innate variations in their capacity.

4. Q: What analogy is used to illustrate the limits of education in changing the inner essence of a person?

A: The analogy of polishing a shell and transforming a colocynth into the Tree of Blessedness is used.

5. Q: How does the passage describe the role of education in bringing forth individual perfections and capacities?

A: Education is described as having the power to bring forth from individuals whatever perfections and capacities are deposited within them.

As to the difference between that material civilization now prevailing, and the divine civilization which will be one of the benefits to derive from the House of Justice, it is this: material civilization, through the power of punitive and retaliatory laws, restraineth the people from criminal acts; and notwithstanding this, while laws to retaliate against and punish a man are continually proliferating,

as ye can see, no laws exist to reward him. In all the cities of Europe and America, vast buildings have been erected to serve as jails for the criminals.

Divine civilization, however, so traineth every member of society that no one, with the exception of a negligible few, will undertake to commit a crime. There is thus a great difference between the prevention of crime through measures that are violent and retaliatory, and so training the people, and enlightening them, and spiritualizing them, that without any fear of punishment or vengeance to come, they will shun all criminal acts. They will, indeed, look upon the very commission of a crime as a great disgrace and in itself the harshest of punishments. They will become enamored of human perfections, and will consecrate their lives to whatever will bring light to the world and will further those qualities which are acceptable at the Holy Threshold of God.

See then how wide is the difference between material civilization and divine. With force and punishments, material civilization seeketh to restrain the people from mischief, from inflicting harm on society and committing crimes. But in a divine civilization, the individual is so conditioned that with no fear of punishment, he shunneth the perpetration of crimes, seeth the crime itself as the severest of torments, and with alacrity and joy, setteth himself to acquiring the virtues of humankind, to furthering human progress, and to spreading light across the world.

Summary:

The passage contrasts material civilization, relying on punitive laws to restrain crime, with divine civilization, which aims to spiritually train individuals to voluntarily avoid criminal acts. Material civilization employs force and punishments, resulting in the proliferation of jails, while divine civilization seeks to enlighten people and spiritualize them. In divine civilization, individuals,

without fear of punishment, avoid crimes and view criminal acts as disgraceful. The focus shifts to acquiring virtues, furthering human progress, and spreading light across the world.

Key Points:

1. Material civilization relies on punitive laws to restrain crime, resulting in the proliferation of jails.
2. Divine civilization spiritually trains individuals to voluntarily avoid criminal acts.
3. Material civilization uses force and punishments to prevent harm and crimes.
4. Divine civilization conditions individuals to shun crimes without fear of punishment.
5. In divine civilization, the commission of a crime is viewed as a great disgrace and the severest of torments.
6. Individuals in divine civilization are enamored of human perfections and consecrate their lives to virtues.
7. The focus in divine civilization is on acquiring virtues, furthering human progress, and spreading light across the world.

Questions and Answers:

1. Q: How does material civilization seek to restrain crime?
A: Material civilization relies on punitive laws and force to restrain crime.
2. Q: What is the approach of divine civilization to preventing criminal acts?
A: Divine civilization spiritually trains individuals to voluntarily avoid criminal acts.
3. Q: What is a notable consequence of material civilization's approach to crime prevention?
A: The proliferation of jails is a notable consequence of material civilization's approach to crime prevention.
4. Q: How do individuals in divine civilization view the commission of a crime?
A: Individuals in divine civilization view the commission of a crime as a great disgrace and the severest of torments.
5. Q: What becomes the focus in divine civilization regarding human behavior?
A: The focus in divine civilization shifts to acquiring virtues, furthering human progress, and spreading light across the world.

– 106 –

Among the greatest of all services that can possibly be rendered by man to Almighty God is the education and training of children, young plants of the Abhá Paradise, so that these children, fostered by grace in the way of salvation, growing like pearls of divine bounty in the shell of education, will one day bejewel the crown of abiding glory.

It is, however, very difficult to undertake this service, even harder to succeed in it. I hope that thou wilt acquit thyself well in this most important of tasks, and successfully carry the day, and become an ensign of God's abounding grace; that these children, reared one and all in the holy Teachings, will develop natures like unto the sweet airs that blow across the gardens of the All-Glorious, and will waft their fragrance around the world.

Summary:

The passage emphasizes the profound service of educating and training children as one of the greatest services to Almighty God. It compares children to young plants of the Abhá Paradise, expressing the hope that, fostered by grace and education, they will grow into pearls of divine bounty, adorning the crown of abiding glory. While acknowledging the difficulty of this service, the encouragement is given to excel in this important task and become an ensign of God's abounding grace. The ultimate vision is for children, raised in the holy Teachings, to develop natures akin to the sweet airs that blow across the gardens of the All-Glorious, spreading their fragrance worldwide.

Key Points:

1. Educating and training children is among the greatest services to Almighty God.
2. Children are likened to young plants of the Abhá Paradise.
3. The aim is for children, fostered by grace and education, to grow into pearls of divine bounty.
4. The vision is for these children to adorn the crown of abiding glory.
5. The task of educating and training children is acknowledged as difficult.
6. Encouragement is given to excel in this important service and become an ensign of God's abounding grace.
7. The desired outcome is for children, raised in the holy Teachings, to develop natures akin to sweet airs, spreading fragrance worldwide.

Questions and Answers:

1. Q: What is considered one of the greatest services to Almighty God?

A: Educating and training children is considered one of the greatest services to Almighty God.

2. Q: How are children described in relation to the Abhá Paradise?

A: Children are likened to young plants of the Abhá Paradise.

3. Q: What is the ultimate vision for children in this passage?

A: The vision is for children, fostered by grace and education, to grow into pearls of divine bounty, adorning the crown of abiding glory.

4. Q: What acknowledgment is made regarding the task of educating and training children?

A: The task is acknowledged as difficult.

5. Q: What encouragement is given to the reader in the passage?

A: Encouragement is given to excel in the important task of educating and training children and become an ensign of God's abounding grace.

It is the hope of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá that those youthful souls in the schoolroom of the deeper knowledge will be tended by one who traineth them to love. May they all, throughout the reaches of the spirit, learn well of the hidden mysteries; so well that in the Kingdom of the All-Glorious, each one of them, even as a nightingale endowed with speech, will cry out the secrets of the Heavenly Realm, and like unto a longing lover pour forth his sore need and utter want of the Beloved.

Summary:

‘Abdu’l-Bahá expresses the hope that young souls in the schoolroom of deeper knowledge will be guided by someone nurturing their love. The aspiration is for these souls to learn the hidden mysteries to such an extent that, in the Kingdom of the All-Glorious, each one will eloquently reveal the secrets of the Heavenly Realm, resembling a nightingale with the ability to speak and expressing their deep longing and need for the Beloved.

Key Points:

1. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá expresses hope for young souls in the schoolroom of deeper knowledge.
2. The desired guidance involves nurturing these souls to love.
3. The aspiration is for these souls to learn the hidden mysteries profoundly.
4. In the Kingdom of the All-Glorious, each soul is envisioned to resemble a nightingale endowed with speech.
5. The ultimate goal is for each soul to reveal the secrets of the Heavenly Realm and express their deep longing for the Beloved.

Questions and Answers:

1. Q: What does ‘Abdu’l-Bahá hope for regarding young souls in the schoolroom of deeper knowledge?

A: ‘Abdu’l-Bahá hopes for them to be guided by someone who nurtures their love.

2. Q: What is the desired outcome of the guidance for these young souls?

A: The desired outcome is for these souls to learn the hidden mysteries profoundly.

3. Q: How are the souls envisioned in the Kingdom of the All-Glorious?

A: They are envisioned to be like nightingales endowed with speech.

4. Q: What is the envisioned role of these souls in the Kingdom of the All-Glorious?

A: The envisioned role is for each soul to reveal the secrets of the Heavenly Realm.

5. Q: What is the poetic expression used to convey the souls' deep longing for the Beloved?

A: The souls are described as resembling a nightingale endowed with speech, expressing their deep longing and need for the Beloved.

– 108 –

Ye should consider the question of goodly character as of the first importance. It is incumbent upon every father and mother to counsel their children over a long period, and guide them unto those things which lead to everlasting honor.

Encourage ye the school children, from their earliest years, to deliver speeches of high quality, so that in their leisure time they will engage in giving cogent and effective talks, expressing themselves with clarity and eloquence.

Summary:

The passage emphasizes the significance of good character, highlighting the responsibility of parents to counsel their children consistently towards actions that lead to lasting honor. It

encourages the promotion of good character from an early age and advocates for the development of communication skills among school children, urging them to deliver high-quality speeches to enhance their ability to express themselves clearly and eloquently.

Key Points:

1. Good character is of the utmost importance.
2. Parents have a duty to counsel their children consistently.
3. The guidance should lead children towards actions resulting in everlasting honor.
4. School children should be encouraged to deliver speeches of high quality.
5. The development of communication skills is essential for children.
6. The aim is for children to express themselves with clarity and eloquence.
7. The promotion of good character and effective communication starts from the earliest years.

Questions and Answers:

1. Q: What is considered of the first importance according to the passage?

A: Goodly character is considered of the first importance.

2. Q: What is the responsibility of parents highlighted in the passage?

A: It is incumbent upon every father and mother to counsel their children consistently.

3. Q: Towards what goal should the guidance from parents lead the children?

A: The guidance should lead children towards actions that result in everlasting honor.

4. Q: What does the passage encourage school children to engage in during their leisure time?

A: The passage encourages school children to deliver speeches of high quality.

5. Q: What skills are deemed essential for school children according to the passage?

A: The development of communication skills, including the ability to express themselves with clarity and eloquence, is deemed essential for school children.

– 109 –

O ye recipients of the favors of God! In this new and wondrous Age, the unshakable foundation is the teaching of sciences and arts. According to explicit Holy Texts, every child must be taught crafts and arts, to the degree that is needful. Wherefore, in every city and village, schools must be established and every child in that city or village is to engage in study to the necessary degree.

It followeth that whatever soul shall offer his aid to bring this about will assuredly be accepted at the heavenly Threshold, and extolled by the Company on high.

Since ye have striven hard toward this all-important end, it is my hope that ye will reap your reward from the Lord of clear tokens and signs, and that the glances of heavenly grace will turn your way.

Summary:

The passage underscores the importance of education in the new Age, particularly focusing on teaching sciences and arts. Holy Texts emphasize the necessity for every child to learn crafts and arts to the required extent. The establishment of schools in every city and village is encouraged to ensure all children engage in necessary studies. The passage concludes with the assurance that

those contributing to this cause will be accepted at the heavenly Threshold and receive praise from the celestial Company.

Key Points:

1. The unshakable foundation in the new Age is the teaching of sciences and arts.
2. Every child must be taught crafts and arts according to explicit Holy Texts.
3. Schools must be established in every city and village.
4. Every child in each city or village is to engage in studies to the necessary degree.
5. Assistance in achieving this educational goal is praised at the heavenly Threshold.
6. Those striving toward this end are expected to receive rewards from the Lord.
7. The passage expresses hope for heavenly grace to turn toward those who have worked hard for this cause.

Questions and Answers:

1. Q: What is emphasized as the unshakable foundation in the new Age?

A: The unshakable foundation is the teaching of sciences and arts.

2. Q: According to Holy Texts, what must every child be taught?

A: Every child must be taught crafts and arts to the necessary degree.

3. Q: What is encouraged to ensure the education of every child?

A: The establishment of schools in every city and village is encouraged.

4. Q: What assurance is given to those contributing to the cause of education?

A: Those offering aid to this cause will be accepted at the heavenly Threshold and praised by the celestial Company.

5. Q: What is the hope expressed for those who have striven toward this educational goal?

A: The hope is that they will reap their reward from the Lord of clear tokens and signs, and that heavenly grace will turn their way.

– 110 –

As to the organization of the schools: if possible the children should all wear the same kind of clothing, even if the fabric is varied. It is preferable that the fabric as well should be uniform; if, however, this is not possible, there is no harm done. The more cleanly the pupils are, the better; they should be immaculate. The school must be located in a place where the air is delicate and pure. The children must be carefully trained to be most courteous and well-behaved. They must be constantly encouraged and made eager to gain all the summits of human accomplishment, so that from their earliest years they will be taught to have high aims, to conduct themselves well, to be chaste, pure, and undefiled, and will learn to be of powerful resolve and firm of purpose in all things. Let them not jest and trifle, but earnestly advance unto their goals, so that in every situation they will be found resolute and firm.

Training in morals and good conduct is far more important than book learning. A child that is cleanly, agreeable, of good character, well-behaved—even though he be ignorant—is preferable to a child that is rude, unwashed, ill-natured, and yet becoming deeply versed in all the sciences and arts. The reason for this is that the child who conducts himself well, even though he be

ignorant, is of benefit to others, while an ill-natured, ill-behaved child is corrupted and harmful to others, even though he be learned. If, however, the child be trained to be both learned and good, the result is light upon light.

Children are even as a branch that is fresh and green; they will grow up in whatever way ye train them. Take the utmost care to give them high ideals and goals, so that once they come of age, they will cast their beams like brilliant candles on the world, and will not be defiled by lusts and passions in the way of animals, heedless and unaware, but instead will set their hearts on achieving everlasting honor and acquiring all the excellences of humankind.

Summary:

The passage emphasizes the organization of schools, suggesting uniform clothing and cleanliness. It highlights the importance of training children in morals and good conduct over mere book learning. The environment of the school should have delicate and pure air. The children should be taught to be courteous, well-behaved, and encouraged to strive for high aims. The passage emphasizes that a child with good character, even if ignorant, is preferable to a learned but ill-

natured child. The training of children to be both learned and good is regarded as achieving light upon light.

Key Points:

1. Organization of schools is discussed, favoring uniform clothing and cleanliness.
2. Training in morals and good conduct is deemed more important than book learning.
3. The school environment should have delicate and pure air.
4. Children should be taught to be courteous, well-behaved, and strive for high aims.
5. A child with good character, even if ignorant, is preferred over a learned but ill-natured child.
6. The training of children to be both learned and good is emphasized for achieving light upon light.

Questions and Answers:

1. Q: What does the passage suggest regarding the clothing of children in schools?
A: It suggests that, if possible, children should wear the same kind of clothing, even if the fabric varies.
2. Q: What is emphasized as more important than book learning?
A: Training in morals and good conduct is emphasized as more important than book learning.
3. Q: What kind of environment is recommended for schools?
A: The school should be located in a place with delicate and pure air.
4. Q: Why is a child with good character preferred over a learned but ill-natured child?
A: A child with good character is beneficial to others, while an ill-natured child is harmful, even if learned.
5. Q: What is the result when a child is trained to be both learned and good?
A: The result is described as light upon light, signifying the combined benefits of knowledge and good character.

– 111 –

The root cause of wrongdoing is ignorance, and we must therefore hold fast to the tools of perception and knowledge. Good character must be taught. Light must be spread afar, so that, in the school of humanity, all may acquire the heavenly characteristics of the spirit, and see for themselves beyond any doubt that there is no fiercer hell, no more fiery abyss, than to possess a character that is evil and unsound; no more darksome pit nor loathsome torment than to show forth qualities which deserve to be condemned.

The individual must be educated to such a high degree that he would rather have his throat cut than tell a lie, and would think it easier to be slashed with a sword or pierced with a spear than to utter calumny or be carried away by wrath.

Thus will be kindled the sense of human dignity and pride, to burn away the reapings of lustful appetites. Then will each one of God's beloved shine out as a bright moon with qualities of the spirit, and the relationship of each to the Sacred Threshold of his Lord will be not illusory but sound and real, will be as the very foundation of the building, not some embellishment on its façade.

It followeth that the children's school must be a place of utmost discipline and order, that instruction must be thorough, and provision must be made for the rectification and refinement of character; so that, in his earliest years, within the very essence of the child, the divine foundation will be laid and the structure of holiness raised up.

Know that this matter of instruction, of character rectification and refinement, of heartening and encouraging the child, is of the utmost importance, for such are basic principles of God.

Thus, if God will, out of these spiritual schools illumined children will arise, adorned with all the fairest virtues of humankind, and will shed their light not only across Persia, but around the world.

It is extremely difficult to teach the individual and refine his character once puberty is passed. By then, as experience hath shown, even if every effort be exerted to modify some tendency of his, it all availeth nothing. He may, perhaps, improve somewhat today; but let a few days pass and he forgetteth, and turneth backward to his habitual condition and accustomed ways. Therefore it is in early childhood that a firm foundation must be laid. While the branch is green and tender it can easily be made straight.

Our meaning is that qualities of the spirit are the basic and divine foundation, and adorn the true essence of man; and knowledge is the cause of human progress. The beloved of God must attach great importance to this matter, and carry it forward with enthusiasm and zeal.

Summary:

The passage underscores the significance of eradicating ignorance through education and cultivating good character. It emphasizes that the root cause of wrongdoing is ignorance and advocates spreading the light of knowledge to counteract it. The development of good character is paramount, and individuals should be educated to a high degree where truthfulness prevails even in the face of severe consequences. The school must be a place of discipline, thorough instruction, and character refinement, laying the divine foundation within the essence of the child. Early childhood is stressed as the crucial time for building a firm moral foundation, as attempting to modify tendencies after puberty proves challenging. The passage concludes by highlighting the

importance of qualities of the spirit as the divine foundation and knowledge as the catalyst for human progress.

Key Points:

1. Ignorance is identified as the root cause of wrongdoing.
2. Good character must be taught, and light must be spread to eradicate ignorance.
3. Education and character refinement are essential in the school of humanity.
4. The sense of human dignity and pride is kindled through moral education.
5. Children's schools must be places of utmost discipline, thorough instruction, and character refinement.
6. Early childhood is emphasized as the crucial time to lay a firm moral foundation.
7. Qualities of the spirit are considered the basic and divine foundation.
8. Knowledge is highlighted as the cause of human progress.

Questions and Answers:

1. Q: What is identified as the root cause of wrongdoing?

A: Ignorance is identified as the root cause of wrongdoing.

2. Q: Why is early childhood emphasized for character development?

A: Early childhood is crucial for laying a firm moral foundation, as modifying tendencies becomes challenging after puberty.

3. Q: What is kindled through moral education?

A: Moral education kindles the sense of human dignity and pride.

4. Q: What is stressed as the essential foundation in the development of children?

A: Qualities of the spirit are stressed as the basic and divine foundation in the development of children.

5. Q: What is highlighted as the cause of human progress?

A: Knowledge is highlighted as the cause of human progress.

– 112 –

In this holy Cause the question of orphans hath the utmost importance. The greatest consideration must be shown towards orphans; they must be taught, trained and educated. The Teachings of Bahá'u'lláh, especially, must by all means be given to them as far as is possible.

I supplicate God that thou mayest become a kind parent to orphaned children, quickening them with the fragrances of the Holy Spirit, so that they will attain the age of maturity as true servants of the world of humanity and as bright candles in the assemblage of mankind.

Summary:

The passage emphasizes the paramount importance of caring for orphans within the Bahá'í Faith. Orphans are to be treated with the utmost consideration, receiving education and training. The Teachings of Bahá'u'lláh are particularly highlighted as a crucial element in their upbringing. The supplication is made for the individual to become a compassionate parent to orphaned children,

nurturing them with the fragrances of the Holy Spirit, with the ultimate goal of fostering their development into true servants of humanity.

Key Points:

1. Orphans hold great importance in the Bahá'í Cause.
2. Orphans should receive care, education, and training.
3. The Teachings of Bahá'u'lláh must be imparted to orphans.
4. A supplication is made for individuals to become kind parents to orphaned children.
5. The goal is to nurture orphans with the fragrances of the Holy Spirit for their development into true servants of humanity.

Questions and Answers:

1. Q: What importance is given to orphans within the Bahá'í Cause?

A: Orphans are highlighted as having the utmost importance in this holy Cause.

2. Q: Besides care, what else is emphasized for orphans?

A: Orphans are to receive education and training.

3. Q: What specific teachings are highlighted for orphans?

A: The Teachings of Bahá'u'lláh are particularly emphasized for orphans.

4. Q: What is the supplication made for individuals in relation to orphans?

A: The supplication is made for individuals to become kind parents to orphaned children.

5. Q: What is the ultimate goal for nurturing orphans according to the passage?

A: The goal is to nurture orphans with the fragrances of the Holy Spirit for their development into true servants of humanity.

– 113 –

O handmaid of God!... To the mothers must be given the divine Teachings and effective counsel, and they must be encouraged and made eager to train their children, for the mother is the first educator of the child. It is she who must, at the very beginning, suckle the newborn at the breast of God's Faith and God's Law, that divine love may enter into him even with his mother's milk, and be with him till his final breath.

So long as the mother faileth to train her children, and start them on a proper way of life, the training which they receive later on will not take its full effect. It is incumbent upon the Spiritual Assemblies to provide the mothers with a well-planned program for the education of children, showing how, from infancy, the child must be watched over and taught. These instructions must be given to every mother to serve her as a guide, so that each will train and nurture her children in accordance with the Teachings.

Thus will these young plants in the garden of God's love grow and flourish under the warmth of the Sun of Truth, the gentle spring winds of Heaven, and their mother's guiding hand. Thus, in the Abhá Paradise, will each become a tree, bearing his clustered fruit, and each one, in this new and wondrous season, out of the bounties of the spring, will become possessed of all beauty and grace.

Summary:

The passage underscores the pivotal role of mothers as the primary educators of their children. Mothers are urged to provide divine teachings and effective counsel to their children, starting from infancy. The nurturing of children with spiritual guidance is emphasized, as the mother's influence during early stages profoundly impacts later training. Spiritual Assemblies are tasked with offering well-planned programs to mothers, guiding them in the education of their children. The ultimate vision is for these nurtured individuals to flourish as young plants in the garden of God's love, growing into trees bearing beautiful fruit in the Abhá Paradise.

Key Points:

1. Mothers play a crucial role as the first educators of their children.
2. Mothers are encouraged to provide divine teachings and effective counsel.
3. Training should commence from infancy, with divine love entering the child from the beginning.
4. Spiritual Assemblies are responsible for providing mothers with guidance on educating their children.
5. The goal is for nurtured individuals to grow and flourish in the Abhá Paradise, becoming like trees with beautiful fruit.

Questions and Answers:

1. Q: What role do mothers play in the education of their children?

A: Mothers are considered the first educators of their children.

2. Q: What should mothers provide to their children according to the passage?

A: Mothers are encouraged to provide divine teachings and effective counsel to their children.

3. Q: When should training of children begin according to the passage?

A: Training should commence from infancy, with divine love entering the child from the beginning.

4. Q: Who is tasked with providing guidance to mothers in educating their children?

A: Spiritual Assemblies are responsible for providing mothers with guidance.

5. Q: What is the ultimate vision for nurtured individuals according to the passage?

A: The goal is for nurtured individuals to grow and flourish in the Abhá Paradise, becoming like trees with beautiful fruit.

O ye loving mothers, know ye that in God's sight, the best of all ways to worship Him is to educate the children and train them in all the perfections of humankind; and no nobler deed than this can be imagined.

Summary:

The passage emphasizes that, in the eyes of God, the most exemplary way to worship Him is through the education and training of children. It extols the virtues of nurturing children and instilling in them the various perfections of humankind as a noble and commendable act.

Key Points:

1. Educating and training children is considered the most commendable way to worship God.
2. The passage underscores the significance and nobility of nurturing the younger generation.
3. The act of educating children is described as a pathway to worship and devotion to God.
4. The perfections of humankind are highlighted as crucial aspects to be instilled in children.
5. The passage suggests that there is no nobler deed in God's sight than the education and training of children.

Questions and Answers:

1. Q: According to the passage, what is the most commendable way to worship God?
A: The most commendable way to worship God is through the education and training of children.
2. Q: How is the act of educating children described in relation to worship?
A: Educating children is described as a pathway to worship and devotion to God.
3. Q: What is emphasized as a significant and noble act in the passage?
A: Nurturing the younger generation is emphasized as a significant and noble act.
4. Q: What are mothers encouraged to do in God's sight according to the passage?
A: Mothers are encouraged to educate and train children in all the perfections of humankind.
5. Q: What does the passage suggest about the importance of nurturing the younger generation?
A: The passage suggests that there is no nobler deed in God's sight than the education and training of children.

– 115 –

O ye two well-loved handmaids of God! Whatever a man's tongue speaketh, that let him prove by his deeds. If he claimeth to be a believer, then let him act in accordance with the precepts of the Abhá Kingdom.

Praised be God, ye two have demonstrated the truth of your words by your deeds, and have won the confirmations of the Lord God. Every day at first light, ye gather the Bahá'í children together and teach them the communes and prayers. This is a most praiseworthy act, and bringeth joy to the children's hearts: that they should, at every morn, turn their faces toward the Kingdom and make mention of the Lord and praise His Name, and in the sweetest of voices, chant and recite.

These children are even as young plants, and teaching them the prayers is as letting the rain pour down upon them, that they may wax tender and fresh, and the soft breezes of the love of God may blow over them, making them to tremble with joy.

Blessedness awaiteth you, and a fair haven.

Summary:

The passage commends two devoted individuals for aligning their words with deeds by teaching Bahá'í children prayers and communing with them each morning. It praises their praiseworthy act, drawing an analogy between the children and young plants, emphasizing the nurturing impact of teaching prayers.

Key Points:

1. Commendation for aligning words with deeds in the context of the Abhá Kingdom.
2. The act of gathering Bahá'í children daily and teaching them prayers is highly praised.
3. Teaching prayers to children is compared to letting rain pour down on young plants for their growth.
4. The soft breezes of God's love are mentioned as impacting the children, making them tremble with joy.
5. The individuals are assured of blessedness and a fair haven for their efforts.

Questions and Answers:

1. Q: What is commended in the passage regarding the two individuals?
A: The two individuals are commended for aligning their words with deeds, particularly in the context of the Abhá Kingdom.
2. Q: What specific act is highly praised in the passage?
A: The act of gathering Bahá'í children daily and teaching them prayers is highly praised.
3. Q: What analogy is drawn in the passage to describe the impact of teaching prayers to children?
A: Teaching prayers to children is compared to letting rain pour down on young plants for their growth.
4. Q: How are the soft breezes of God's love described in relation to the children?
A: The soft breezes of God's love are mentioned as making the children tremble with joy.
5. Q: What assurance is given to the two individuals in the passage?
A: The individuals are assured of blessedness and a fair haven for their efforts in teaching prayers to the children.

– 116 –

O thou daughter of the Kingdom! Thy letters were received. Their contents indicated that thy mother hath ascended to the invisible realm and that thou hast been left alone. Thy wish is to serve thy father, who is dear to thee, and also to serve the Kingdom of God, and thou art perplexed as to which of the two thou shouldst do. Assuredly engage in service to thy father, and as well, whenever thou findest time, diffuse the divine fragrances.

Summary:

The passage addresses a daughter who, having lost her mother and feeling torn between serving her father and the Kingdom of God, is advised to prioritize service to her father while also engaging in spreading divine fragrances whenever possible.

Key Points:

1. The recipient has lost her mother and expresses a desire to serve both her father and the Kingdom of God.
2. The advice given is to prioritize service to the father.
3. The daughter is encouraged to engage in the service of her father and, whenever time permits, also diffuse divine fragrances.
4. Balancing service to family and the Kingdom of God is acknowledged.
5. The passage offers guidance on making choices that align with familial responsibilities.

Questions and Answers:

1. Q: What is the recipient advised to prioritize?

A: The recipient is advised to prioritize service to her father.

2. Q: What does the daughter express in the passage?

A: The daughter expresses a desire to serve both her father and the Kingdom of God.

3. Q: Besides serving her father, what is the daughter encouraged to do?

A: The daughter is encouraged to diffuse divine fragrances whenever time permits.

4. Q: How is the balancing of service to family and the Kingdom of God acknowledged?

A: The passage acknowledges that the daughter is torn between serving her family and the Kingdom of God.

5. Q: What guidance does the passage provide regarding the recipient's choices?

A: The passage provides guidance to prioritize service to the father while also engaging in spreading divine fragrances whenever possible.

– 117 –

O dear one of 'Abdu'l-Bahá! Be the son of thy father and be the fruit of that tree. Be a son that hath been born of his soul and heart and not only of water and clay. A real son is such a one as hath branched from the spiritual part of man. I ask God that thou mayest be at all times confirmed and strengthened.

Summary:

The passage is a message encouraging someone, referred to as the "dear one of 'Abdu'l-Bahá," to be a true son of their father, not just in physical descent but also spiritually. The emphasis is on

being born of the father's soul and heart, embodying the spiritual qualities. The sender expresses a prayer for the recipient to be continually confirmed and strengthened.

Key Points:

1. The recipient is addressed as the "dear one of 'Abdu'l-Bahá."
2. The encouragement is to be a true son, not only in physical descent but also spiritually.
3. The metaphor of being born of the father's soul and heart is used.
4. The passage emphasizes the importance of spiritual qualities.
5. A prayer is expressed for the recipient to be continually confirmed and strengthened.

Questions and Answers:

1. Q: How is the recipient addressed in the passage?
A: The recipient is addressed as the "dear one of 'Abdu'l-Bahá."
2. Q: What is the emphasis regarding being a true son?
A: The emphasis is on being born not only of water and clay but also of the father's soul and heart.
3. Q: What metaphor is used in the passage?
A: The metaphor of being born of the father's soul and heart is used.
4. Q: What does the passage highlight regarding spiritual qualities?
A: The passage highlights the importance of embodying spiritual qualities.
5. Q: What is expressed in the prayer for the recipient?
A: The prayer expresses a wish for the recipient to be continually confirmed and strengthened.

– 118 –

O ye young Bahá'í children, ye seekers after true understanding and knowledge! A human being is distinguished from an animal in a number of ways. First of all, he is made in the image of God, in the likeness of the Supernal Light, even as the Torah saith, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness."¹ This divine image betokeneth all the qualities of perfection whose lights, emanating from the Sun of Truth, illumine the realities of man. And among the greatest of these attributes of perfection are wisdom and knowledge. Ye must therefore put forth a mighty effort, striving by night and day and resting not for a moment, to acquire an abundant share of all the sciences and arts, that the Divine Image, which shineth out from the Sun of Truth, may illumine the mirror of the hearts of men.

It is the longing desire of 'Abdu'l-Bahá to see each one of you accounted as the foremost professor in the academies, and in the school of inner significances, each one becoming a leader in wisdom.

Summary:

The passage is an exhortation to young Bahá'í children to seek true understanding and knowledge. It emphasizes that humans are distinguished from animals by being made in the image of God, highlighting the attributes of perfection, particularly wisdom and knowledge. 'Abdu'l-Bahá

expresses a strong desire for the children to become leaders in academic and inner knowledge, striving day and night to acquire sciences and arts.

Key Points:

1. Human beings are distinguished from animals by being made in the image of God.
2. The divine image includes qualities of perfection, especially wisdom and knowledge.
3. The metaphor of the Sun of Truth illuminating the mirror of hearts is used.
4. The children are encouraged to make a mighty effort to acquire sciences and arts.
5. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá expresses a longing to see the children become leaders in both academic and inner wisdom.

Questions and Answers:

1. Q: What distinguishes human beings from animals, according to the passage?

A: Human beings are distinguished by being made in the image of God.

2. Q: Which qualities of perfection are highlighted in the divine image?

A: The qualities of perfection, especially wisdom and knowledge, are highlighted.

3. Q: What metaphor is used to describe the illumination of human hearts?

A: The metaphor of the Sun of Truth illuminating the mirror of hearts is used.

4. Q: What does ‘Abdu’l-Bahá encourage the children to strive for?

A: ‘Abdu’l-Bahá encourages the children to strive to acquire an abundant share of all sciences and arts.

5. Q: What is expressed as ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s longing for the children?

A: ‘Abdu’l-Bahá expresses a longing to see each child become a leader in both academic and inner wisdom.

– 119 –

It is incumbent upon Bahá’í children to surpass other children in the acquisition of sciences and arts, for they have been cradled in the grace of God.

Whatever other children learn in a year, let Bahá’í children learn in a month. The heart of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá longeth, in its love, to find that Bahá’í young people, each and all, are known throughout the world for their intellectual attainments. There is no question but that they will exert all their efforts, their energies, their sense of pride, to acquire the sciences and arts.

Summary:

The passage emphasizes the obligation for Bahá’í children to excel in the acquisition of sciences and arts as they are cradled in the grace of God. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá expresses a longing for Bahá’í young people to be globally recognized for their intellectual attainments. The exhortation is for

Bahá'í children to outpace their peers in learning, aiming to achieve in a month what others learn in a year.

Key Points:

1. Bahá'í children are urged to surpass other children in the acquisition of sciences and arts.
2. The cradling in the grace of God is highlighted as a special privilege for Bahá'í children.
3. 'Abdu'l-Bahá expresses a strong desire for Bahá'í young people to be globally known for their intellectual attainments.
4. The comparison is made for Bahá'í children to learn in a month what other children learn in a year.
5. The passage stresses the expectation for Bahá'í children to exert all efforts and energies to acquire sciences and arts.

Questions and Answers:

1. Q: What obligation is emphasized for Bahá'í children in the passage?

A: The obligation for Bahá'í children to excel in the acquisition of sciences and arts is emphasized.

2. Q: What privilege is associated with Bahá'í children?

A: They are cradled in the grace of God, signifying a special privilege.

3. Q: What does 'Abdu'l-Bahá express a longing for regarding Bahá'í young people?

A: 'Abdu'l-Bahá expresses a longing for Bahá'í young people to be globally recognized for their intellectual attainments.

4. Q: What comparison is made regarding the pace of learning for Bahá'í children?

A: The comparison is made that Bahá'í children should learn in a month what other children learn in a year.

5. Q: What expectation is stressed for Bahá'í children in the passage?

A: The passage stresses the expectation for Bahá'í children to exert all efforts and energies to acquire sciences and arts.

– 120 –

O my dear children! Your letter was received. A degree of joy was attained that is beyond words or writing that, praise be to God, the power of the Kingdom of God hath trained such children who, from their early childhood, eagerly wish to acquire Bahá'í education that they may, from the period of their childhood, engage in service to the world of humanity.

My highest wish and desire is that ye who are my children may be educated according to the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh and may receive a Bahá'í training; that ye may each become a lighted candle in the world of humanity, may be devoted to the service of all mankind, may give up your rest and comfort, so that ye may become the cause of the tranquillity of the world of creation.

Such is my hope for you and I trust that ye may become the cause of my joy and gladness in the Kingdom of God.

Summary:

The passage conveys ‘Abdu’l-Bahá's profound joy upon receiving a letter from children expressing their eagerness to acquire Bahá’í education. He expresses his highest wish for these children to be educated according to Bahá’í teachings, becoming illuminated candles in the world, devoted to serving all of humanity.

Key Points:

1. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá joyfully receives a letter from children expressing their eagerness for Bahá’í education.
2. The power of the Kingdom of God is acknowledged for training such children who wish to engage in service from their early childhood.
3. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá's highest wish is for these children to be educated according to Bahá’í teachings.
4. The envisioned outcome is for these children to become illuminated candles in the world, devoted to serving all of humanity.
5. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá expresses hope that these children will bring him joy and gladness in the Kingdom of God.

Questions and Answers:

1. Q: What kind of letter did ‘Abdu’l-Bahá receive from the children?

A: ‘Abdu’l-Bahá received a letter expressing the children's eagerness to acquire Bahá’í education.

2. Q: What does ‘Abdu’l-Bahá attribute to the power of the Kingdom of God?

A: The power of the Kingdom of God is attributed to training children who wish to engage in service from their early childhood.

3. Q: What is ‘Abdu’l-Bahá's highest wish for these children?

A: ‘Abdu’l-Bahá's highest wish is for these children to be educated according to Bahá’í teachings.

4. Q: What is the envisioned outcome for these children?

A: The envisioned outcome is for these children to become illuminated candles in the world, devoted to serving all of humanity.

5. Q: What does ‘Abdu’l-Bahá hope these children will bring him in the Kingdom of God?

A: ‘Abdu’l-Bahá hopes that these children will bring him joy and gladness in the Kingdom of God.

– 121 –

O thou whose years are few, yet whose mental gifts are many! How many a child, though young in years, is yet mature and sound in judgment! How many an aged person is ignorant and confused! For growth and development depend on one’s powers of intellect and reason, not on one’s age or length of days.

Although still in the season of childhood, yet hast thou recognized thy Lord, while myriads of women are oblivious of Him and are shut away from His heavenly Kingdom and deprived of His bestowals. Render thou thanks unto thy Lord for this wondrous gift.

I beg of God to heal thy mother, who is honored in the Kingdom of heaven.

Summary:

The passage addresses a young person, acknowledging their mature intellect despite their tender age. The young individual is praised for recognizing the Lord, while many others remain oblivious to Him. The passage concludes with a prayer for the healing of the addressed person's mother, who is honored in the Kingdom of heaven.

Key Points:

1. The addressed person, though young, is acknowledged for possessing mature intellect and judgment.
2. Recognition of the Lord is highlighted as a wondrous gift bestowed upon the young individual.
3. Gratitude is expressed to the Lord for the bestowed gift.
4. The passage ends with a prayer for the healing of the addressed person's mother, who is honored in the Kingdom of heaven.

Questions and Answers:

1. Q: What is acknowledged about the addressed person despite their young age?

A: The addressed person is acknowledged for possessing mature intellect and judgment despite their young age.

2. Q: What is highlighted as a wondrous gift in the passage?

A: Recognition of the Lord is highlighted as a wondrous gift bestowed upon the young individual.

3. Q: What does the passage express gratitude for?

A: The passage expresses gratitude to the Lord for the wondrous gift of recognizing Him.

4. Q: How does the passage conclude?

A: The passage concludes with a prayer for the healing of the addressed person's mother, who is honored in the Kingdom of heaven.

5. Q: What is the specific request in the prayer mentioned in the passage?

A: The specific request in the prayer is for the healing of the addressed person's mother, who is honored in the Kingdom of heaven.

– 122 –

As to thy question regarding the education of children: it behooveth thee to nurture them at the breast of the love of God, and urge them onward to the things of the spirit, that they may turn their faces unto God; that their ways may conform to the rules of good conduct and their character be second to none; that they make their own all the graces and praiseworthy qualities of humankind; acquire a sound knowledge of the various branches of learning, so that from the very beginning of life they may become spiritual beings, dwellers in the Kingdom, enamored of the sweet breaths of holiness, and may receive an education religious, spiritual, and of the Heavenly Realm. Verily will I call upon God to grant them a happy outcome in this.

Summary:

The passage emphasizes the importance of nurturing children with the love of God and guiding them toward spiritual development. The goal is to encourage children to turn their faces toward God, adhere to good conduct, and embody praiseworthy qualities. The passage also underscores the significance of providing children with a comprehensive education that encompasses spiritual, religious, and of the heavenly realms.

Key Points:

1. Nurture children with the love of God from the beginning.
2. Guide children toward spiritual development and a connection with God.
3. Encourage adherence to good conduct and the acquisition of praiseworthy qualities.
4. Emphasize the importance of a comprehensive education covering spiritual, religious, and heavenly realms.
5. Call upon God for a happy outcome in the children's spiritual and educational journey.

Questions and Answers:

1. Q: What is the primary emphasis in nurturing children according to the passage?

A: The primary emphasis is on nurturing children with the love of God.

2. Q: What is the desired outcome for children in terms of character?

A: The desired outcome is that children have character second to none, embodying praiseworthy qualities.

3. Q: What realms does the passage mention in relation to children's education?

A: The passage mentions spiritual, religious, and of the heavenly realms as integral components of children's education.

4. Q: What is the goal regarding children's connection with God?

A: The goal is to encourage children to turn their faces toward God and develop a spiritual connection.

5. Q: What does the passage request from God for the children?

A: The passage requests a happy outcome in the children's spiritual and educational journey from God.

– 123 –

O thou who gazest upon the Kingdom of God! Thy letter was received and we note that thou art engaged in teaching the children of the believers, that these tender little ones have been learning *The Hidden Words* and the prayers and what it meaneth to be a Bahá'í.

The instruction of these children is even as the work of a loving gardener who tendeth his young plants in the flowering fields of the All-Glorious. There is no doubt that it will yield the desired results; especially is this true of instruction as to Bahá'í obligations and Bahá'í conduct, for the little children must needs be made aware in their very heart and soul that “Bahá'í” is not just a name but a truth. Every child must be trained in the things of the spirit, so that he may embody all

the virtues and become a source of glory to the Cause of God. Otherwise, the mere word “Bahá’í,” if it yield no fruit, will come to nothing.

Strive then to the best of thine ability to let these children know that a Bahá’í is one who embodieth all the perfections, that he must shine out like a lighted taper—not be darkness upon darkness and yet bear the name “Bahá’í.”

Name thou this school the Bahá’í Sunday School.¹

Summary:

The passage emphasizes the importance of teaching Bahá’í children with a focus on Bahá’í obligations, conduct, and spiritual virtues. It likens the instruction to the work of a loving gardener nurturing young plants in the flowering fields of the All-Glorious. The goal is to ensure that the children understand the essence of being a Bahá’í and embody virtues, making the name "Bahá’í" meaningful. The passage suggests naming the school the "Bahá’í Sunday School."

Key Points:

1. Teach children The Hidden Words, prayers, and the meaning of being a Bahá’í.
2. Compare the instruction to the work of a gardener in the fields of the All-Glorious.
3. Emphasize the significance of instructing children in Bahá’í obligations and conduct.
4. Stress that being a Bahá’í is not just a name but a truth that must yield virtuous fruits.
5. Encourage children to embody all virtues and become a source of glory to the Cause of God.
6. Name the school the "Bahá’í Sunday School."

Questions and Answers:

1. Q: What does the passage compare the instruction of Bahá’í children to?

A: The passage compares the instruction to the work of a loving gardener tending young plants in the flowering fields of the All-Glorious.

2. Q: What virtues should Bahá’í children embody, according to the passage?

A: Bahá’í children should embody all virtues and become a source of glory to the Cause of God.

3. Q: How does the passage define being a Bahá’í?

A: Being a Bahá’í is defined as not just a name but a truth that must yield virtuous fruits.

4. Q: What is the suggested name for the school in the passage?

A: The suggested name for the school is the "Bahá’í Sunday School."

5. Q: What does the passage stress regarding the understanding of being a Bahá’í?

A: The passage stresses the importance of ensuring that children understand that being a Bahá’í is not just a name but a truth that should yield virtuous fruits.

The Sunday school for the children in which the Tablets and Teachings of Bahá’u’lláh are read, and the Word of God is recited for the children is indeed a blessed thing. Thou must certainly continue this organized activity without cessation, and attach importance to it, so that day by day it may grow and be quickened with the breaths of the Holy Spirit. If this activity is well organized, rest thou assured that it will yield great results. Firmness and steadfastness, however, are necessary,

otherwise it will continue for some time, but later be gradually forgotten. Perseverance is an essential condition. In every project firmness and steadfastness will undoubtedly lead to good results; otherwise it will exist for some days, and then be discontinued.

Summary:

The passage emphasizes the importance of the Sunday school for children where Tablets and Teachings of Bahá'u'lláh are read, and the Word of God is recited. It describes this organized activity as a blessed endeavor that should be continued without cessation. The passage highlights the need for firmness, steadfastness, and perseverance in order for the activity to yield great results. Without these qualities, there is a risk of the initiative being gradually forgotten.

Key Points:

1. The Sunday school is a blessed activity for children where Bahá'í Teachings are shared.
2. The continuous and organized nature of this activity is crucial for its success.
3. Importance is placed on the growth and vitality of the Sunday school with the breaths of the Holy Spirit.
4. Firmness, steadfastness, and perseverance are essential conditions for the success of the project.
5. The passage warns against the risk of discontinuation if there is a lack of perseverance in the initiative.

Questions and Answers:

1. Q: What type of activity is emphasized for children in the passage?

A: The passage emphasizes the importance of the Sunday school for children where Tablets and Teachings of Bahá'u'lláh are read, and the Word of God is recited.

2. Q: What is described as a crucial factor for the success of the Sunday school activity?

A: Continuous and organized nature of the Sunday school activity is described as crucial for its success.

3. Q: What is highlighted as necessary for the Sunday school to yield great results?

A: Firmness, steadfastness, and perseverance are highlighted as necessary for the Sunday school to yield great results.

4. Q: What risk does the passage warn against if certain qualities are lacking?

A: The passage warns against the risk of discontinuation if there is a lack of perseverance in the Sunday school initiative.

5. Q: What does the passage mention as vital for the growth of the Sunday school?

A: The passage mentions the need for the Sunday school to be quickened with the breaths of the Holy Spirit for its growth.

The changing of teachers should be neither too frequent nor too much delayed; moderation is preferable. Holding your meetings when it is the time of prayer in other churches is not advisable; it would lead to alienation, since the Bahá'í children who have their own Sunday school would be deprived of it if they tried to attend other Sunday schools. Moreover, the admission of children of

non-Bahá'í parents to the school for Bahá'í children is permissible. And if, in this school, an outline of the fundamental principles underlying all religions be set forth for the information of the children, it can do no harm.

As the children are few in number, it is not possible to have different classes and naturally only one is necessary. Concerning the last question regarding differences among children, act as ye deem advisable.

Summary:

The passage discusses considerations for the changing of teachers in Bahá'í Sunday schools, emphasizing the importance of moderation. It advises against scheduling meetings during the time of prayer in other churches to avoid alienation. The passage permits the admission of children from non-Bahá'í parents to the Bahá'í Sunday school. It also suggests presenting an outline of the fundamental principles underlying all religions to the children. Due to the small number of

children, the need for multiple classes is deemed unnecessary. Regarding differences among children, the advice is given to act as deemed advisable.

Key Points:

1. Moderation is preferable when changing teachers in Bahá'í Sunday schools.
2. Meetings should not coincide with the time of prayer in other churches to avoid alienation.
3. Admission of children from non-Bahá'í parents to the Bahá'í Sunday school is permissible.
4. Presenting an outline of fundamental principles underlying all religions to children is encouraged.
5. Due to a small number of children, having different classes is considered unnecessary.
6. Regarding differences among children, the advice is given to act as deemed advisable.

Questions and Answers:

1. Q: What is emphasized regarding the changing of teachers in Bahá'í Sunday schools?

A: Moderation is emphasized when changing teachers in Bahá'í Sunday schools.

2. Q: Why is it advised not to schedule meetings during the time of prayer in other churches?

A: Scheduling meetings during the time of prayer in other churches is advised against to avoid alienation.

3. Q: Is the admission of children from non-Bahá'í parents to Bahá'í Sunday school allowed?

A: Yes, the admission of children from non-Bahá'í parents to the Bahá'í Sunday school is permissible.

4. Q: What is encouraged regarding the presentation of information to Bahá'í children in Sunday school?

A: Presenting an outline of fundamental principles underlying all religions is encouraged.

5. Q: Why is having different classes considered unnecessary in Bahá'í Sunday schools?

A: Due to the small number of children, having different classes is considered unnecessary.

6. Q: How does the passage advise regarding differences among children?

A: The advice is given to act as deemed advisable regarding differences among children.

– 126 –

Thy letter was received. Praise be to God it imparted the good news of thy health and safety and indicated that thou art ready to enter an agricultural school. This is highly suitable. Strive as much as possible to become proficient in the science of agriculture, for in accordance with the divine teachings the acquisition of sciences and the perfection of arts are considered acts of worship. If a man engageth with all his power in the acquisition of a science or in the perfection of an art, it is as if he has been worshipping God in churches and temples. Thus as thou enterest a school of agriculture and strivest in the acquisition of that science thou art day and night engaged in acts of worship—acts that are accepted at the threshold of the Almighty. What bounty greater than this that science should be considered as an act of worship and art as service to the Kingdom of God.

Summary:

The passage celebrates the good news of the recipient's health and readiness to enter an agricultural school. It emphasizes the significance of becoming proficient in the science of agriculture, aligning with divine teachings that consider the acquisition of sciences and perfection of arts as acts of worship. Engaging wholeheartedly in the pursuit of knowledge and skill is likened to worshipping God in churches and temples. The passage highlights the bounty of science being regarded as an act of worship and art as service to the Kingdom of God.

Key Points:

1. The letter conveys good news about the recipient's health and safety.
2. Entering an agricultural school is deemed highly suitable.
3. The acquisition of sciences and perfection of arts are considered acts of worship in accordance with divine teachings.
4. Engaging with power in acquiring a science or perfecting an art is equated to worshipping God in churches and temples.
5. The pursuit of knowledge and skill is viewed as continuous engagement in acts of worship.
6. The bounty is emphasized in science being considered an act of worship and art serving the Kingdom of God.

Questions and Answers:

1. Q: What is the recipient praised for in the letter?

A: The recipient is praised for their health, safety, and readiness to enter an agricultural school.

2. Q: According to the passage, what is considered as acts of worship?

A: The acquisition of sciences and perfection of arts are considered acts of worship.

3. Q: How is engaging in the pursuit of knowledge and skill described in the passage?

A: Engaging in the pursuit of knowledge and skill is described as being akin to worshipping God in churches and temples.

4. Q: What is the significance of science being considered an act of worship?

A: Science being considered an act of worship is highlighted as a bounty and a significant aspect in divine teachings.

5. Q: How is the recipient encouraged to approach the study of agriculture?

A: The recipient is encouraged to strive as much as possible to become proficient in the science of agriculture.

6. Q: What is the parallel drawn between science, art, and worship in the passage?

A: The parallel drawn is that science is considered an act of worship, and art is seen as service to the Kingdom of God.

O thou servant of the One true God! In this universal dispensation man's wondrous craftsmanship is reckoned as worship of the Resplendent Beauty. Consider what a bounty and blessing it is that

craftsmanship is regarded as worship. In former times, it was believed that such skills were tantamount to ignorance, if not a misfortune, hindering man from drawing nigh unto God. Now consider how His infinite bestowals and abundant favors have changed hellfire into blissful paradise, and a heap of dark dust into a luminous garden.

It behooveth the craftsmen of the world at each moment to offer a thousand tokens of gratitude at the Sacred Threshold, and to exert their highest endeavor and diligently pursue their professions so that their efforts may produce that which will manifest the greatest beauty and perfection before the eyes of all men.

Summary:

The passage extols the transformation of man's craftsmanship into an act of worship in the current universal dispensation. Craftsmanship is celebrated as a bounty and blessing, a departure from past beliefs that considered such skills hindrances to drawing near to God. The shift from viewing craftsmanship as ignorance to recognizing it as worship is highlighted as a result of God's infinite

bestowals. Craftsmen are urged to express gratitude and diligently pursue their professions to create works of great beauty and perfection.

Key Points:

1. Craftsmanship is considered worship in the present universal dispensation.
2. Formerly, such skills were viewed as ignorance or hindrance to drawing near to God.
3. God's infinite bestowals have transformed craftsmanship from a negative view to a positive one.
4. Craftsmen are encouraged to offer tokens of gratitude at the Sacred Threshold.
5. Diligent pursuit of professions is emphasized to create works of great beauty and perfection.

Questions and Answers:

1. Q: What is the current view of craftsmanship in the universal dispensation?

A: Craftsmanship is regarded as worship in the present universal dispensation.

2. Q: How were such skills viewed in former times?

A: In former times, craftsmanship was believed to be tantamount to ignorance or a hindrance to drawing near to God.

3. Q: What is emphasized as a result of God's infinite bestowals?

A: Craftsmanship is transformed from a negative view to a positive one as a result of God's infinite bestowals.

4. Q: What are craftsmen urged to do in the passage?

A: Craftsmen are urged to offer a thousand tokens of gratitude at the Sacred Threshold and diligently pursue their professions.

5. Q: What is the desired outcome of craftsmen's efforts according to the passage?

A: The desired outcome is the creation of works that manifest the greatest beauty and perfection before the eyes of all men.

– 128 –

Thy letter was received. I hope that thou mayest be protected and assisted under the providence of the True One, be occupied always in mentioning the Lord and display effort to complete thy profession. Thou must endeavor greatly so that thou mayest become unique in thy profession and famous in those parts, because attaining perfection in one's profession in this merciful period is considered to be worship of God. And whilst thou art occupied with thy profession, thou canst remember the True One.

Summary:

The letter emphasizes the importance of being protected and assisted by the True One. The recipient is encouraged to mention the Lord continuously and put effort into completing their profession. Attaining perfection in one's profession is highlighted as an act of worship in the present merciful period. The individual is urged to strive to become unique and famous in their

chosen field, with the understanding that remembering God can be integrated into professional endeavors.

Key Points:

1. The recipient is encouraged to be protected and assisted by the True One.
2. Continuous mention of the Lord is emphasized.
3. Effort should be directed toward completing one's profession.
4. Attaining perfection in the chosen profession is considered an act of worship in the present merciful period.
5. Striving to become unique and famous in the profession is urged.

Questions and Answers:

1. Q: What is emphasized as an act of worship in the present period?

A: Attaining perfection in one's profession is emphasized as an act of worship in the present merciful period.

2. Q: What encouragement is given regarding mentioning the Lord?

A: The recipient is encouraged to be occupied always in mentioning the Lord.

3. Q: What should the individual strive for in their chosen field?

A: The individual is urged to strive to become unique and famous in their chosen profession.

4. Q: How is remembering the True One integrated into professional endeavors?

A: The understanding is that while occupied with one's profession, one can remember the True One.

5. Q: According to the letter, what is the desired outcome of the individual's efforts?

A: The desired outcome is for the individual to become unique in their profession and famous in those parts.

– 129 –

O Friends of the Pure and Omnipotent God! To be pure and holy in all things is an attribute of the consecrated soul and a necessary characteristic of the unenslaved mind. The best of perfections is immaculacy and the freeing of oneself from every defect. Once the individual is, in every respect, cleansed and purified, then will he become a focal center reflecting the Manifest Light.

First in a human being's way of life must be purity, then freshness, cleanliness, and independence of spirit. First must the stream bed be cleansed, then may the sweet river waters be led into it. Chaste eyes enjoy the beatific vision of the Lord and know what this encounter meaneth; a pure sense inhalet the fragrances that blow from the rose gardens of His grace; a burnished heart will mirror forth the comely face of truth.

This is why, in Holy Scriptures, the counsels of heaven are likened to water, even as the Qur'án saith: "And pure water send We down from Heaven,"¹ and the Gospel: "Except a man be baptized of water and of the spirit, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God."² Thus is it clear that the Teachings which come from God are heavenly outpourings of grace; they are rain-showers of divine mercy, and they cleanse the human heart.

My meaning is this, that in every aspect of life, purity and holiness, cleanliness and refinement, exalt the human condition and further the development of man's inner reality. Even in the physical realm, cleanliness will conduce to spirituality, as the Holy Writings clearly state. And although bodily cleanliness is a physical thing, it hath, nevertheless, a powerful influence on the life of the spirit. It is even as a voice wondrously sweet, or a melody played: although sounds are but vibrations in the air which affect the ear's auditory nerve, and these vibrations are but chance phenomena carried along through the air, even so, see how they move the heart. A wondrous melody is wings for the spirit, and maketh the soul to tremble for joy. The purport is that physical cleanliness doth also exert its effect upon the human soul.

Observe how pleasing is cleanliness in the sight of God, and how specifically it is emphasized in the Holy Books of the Prophets; for the Scriptures forbid the eating or the use of any unclean thing. Some of these prohibitions were absolute, and binding upon all, and whoso transgressed the given law was abhorred of God and anathematized by the believers. Such, for example, were things categorically forbidden, the perpetration of which was accounted a most grievous sin, among them actions so loathsome that it is shameful even to speak their name.

But there are other forbidden things which do not cause immediate harm, and the injurious effects of which are only gradually produced: such acts are also repugnant to the Lord, and blameworthy in His sight, and repellent. The absolute unlawfulness of these, however, hath not been expressly set forth in the Text, but their avoidance is necessary to purity, cleanliness, the preservation of health, and freedom from addiction.

Among these latter is smoking tobacco, which is dirty, smelly, offensive—an evil habit, and one the harmfulness of which gradually becometh apparent to all. Every qualified physician hath ruled—and this hath also been proven by tests—that one of the components of tobacco is a deadly poison, and that the smoker is vulnerable to many and various diseases. This is why smoking hath been plainly set forth as repugnant from the standpoint of hygiene.

The Báb, at the outset of His mission, explicitly prohibited tobacco, and the friends one and all abandoned its use. But since those were times when dissimulation was permitted, and every individual who abstained from smoking was exposed to harassment, abuse and even death—the friends, in order not to advertise their beliefs, would smoke. Later on, the Book of Aqdas was revealed, and since smoking tobacco was not specifically forbidden there, the believers did not give it up. The Blessed Beauty, however, always expressed repugnance for it, and although, in the early days, there were reasons why He would smoke a little tobacco, in time He completely renounced it, and those sanctified souls who followed Him in all things also abandoned its use.

My meaning is that in the sight of God, smoking tobacco is deprecated, abhorrent, filthy in the extreme; and, albeit by degrees, highly injurious to health. It is also a waste of money and time, and maketh the user a prey to a noxious addiction. To those who stand firm in the Covenant, this habit is therefore censured both by reason and experience, and renouncing it will bring relief and peace of mind to all men. Furthermore, this will make it possible to have a fresh mouth and unstained fingers, and hair that is free of a foul and repellent smell. On receipt of this missive, the friends will surely, by whatever means and even over a period of time, forsake this pernicious habit. Such is my hope.

As to opium, it is foul and accursed. God protect us from the punishment He inflicteth on the user. According to the explicit Text of the Most Holy Book, it is forbidden, and its use is utterly condemned. Reason showeth that smoking opium is a kind of insanity, and experience attesteth that the user is completely cut off from the human kingdom. May God protect all against the perpetration of an act so hideous as this, an act which layeth in ruins the very foundation of what

it is to be human, and which causeth the user to be dispossessed for ever and ever. For opium fasteneth on the soul, so that the user's conscience dieth, his mind is blotted away, his perceptions are eroded. It turneth the living into the dead. It quencheth the natural heat. No greater harm can be conceived than that which opium inflicteth. Fortunate are they who never even speak the name of it; then think how wretched is the user.

O ye lovers of God! In this, the cycle of Almighty God, violence and force, constraint and oppression, are one and all condemned. It is, however, mandatory that the use of opium be prevented by any means whatsoever, that perchance the human race may be delivered from this most powerful of plagues. And otherwise, woe and misery to whoso falleth short of his duty to his Lord.³

O Divine Providence! Bestow Thou in all things purity and cleanliness upon the people of Bahá. Grant that they be freed from all defilement, and released from all addictions. Save them from committing any repugnant act, unbind them from the chains of every evil habit, that they may live pure and free, wholesome and cleanly, worthy to serve at Thy Sacred Threshold and fit to be related to their Lord. Deliver them from intoxicating drinks and tobacco, save them, rescue them, from this opium that bringeth on madness, suffer them to enjoy the sweet savors of holiness, that they may drink deep of the mystic cup of heavenly love and know the rapture of being drawn ever closer unto the Realm of the All-Glorious. For it is even as Thou hast said: "All that thou hast in thy cellar will not appease the thirst of my love—bring me, O cupbearer, of the wine of the spirit a cup full as the sea!"

O ye, God's loved ones! Experience hath shown how greatly the renouncing of smoking, of intoxicating drink, and of opium, conduceth to health and vigor, to the expansion and keenness of the mind and to bodily strength. There is today a people⁴ who strictly avoid tobacco, intoxicating liquor and opium. This people is far and away superior to the others, for strength and physical courage, for health, beauty and comeliness. A single one of their men can stand up to ten men of another tribe. This hath proved true of the entire people: that is, member for member, each individual of this community is in every respect superior to the individuals of other communities.

Make ye then a mighty effort, that the purity and sanctity which, above all else, are cherished by 'Abdu'l-Bahá, shall distinguish the people of Bahá; that in every kind of excellence the people of God shall surpass all other human beings; that both outwardly and inwardly they shall prove superior to the rest; that for purity, immaculacy, refinement, and the preservation of health, they shall be leaders in the vanguard of those who know. And that by their freedom from enslavement, their knowledge, their self-control, they shall be first among the pure, the free and the wise.

Summary:

The letter emphasizes the significance of purity and holiness in every aspect of life, as well as the avoidance of harmful substances. It particularly addresses the issues of tobacco and opium, condemning their use and highlighting the detrimental effects on health and spirituality. The

followers of Bahá'u'lláh are urged to renounce smoking and opium for the sake of physical and spiritual well-being, cleanliness, and to set an example for others.

Key Points:

1. Purity and holiness are essential attributes of the consecrated soul.
2. Physical cleanliness influences spiritual development and reflects the Manifest Light.
3. The letter condemns the use of tobacco, emphasizing its filthy and harmful nature.
4. Opium is explicitly forbidden, described as foul, accursed, and leading to spiritual disconnection.
5. The avoidance of harmful substances contributes to health, cleanliness, and freedom from addiction.
6. Smoking tobacco is deprecated and abhorrent in the sight of God; its avoidance is necessary for purity.
7. Opium use is condemned as akin to insanity, resulting in disconnection from the human kingdom.
8. The followers are urged to prevent the use of opium by any means and seek deliverance from this plague.
9. Violence and force are condemned in the present cycle; opium use is considered a form of violence against the self.
10. The letter prays for purity, cleanliness, and deliverance from addictions for the followers.
11. Renouncing smoking, intoxicating drinks, and opium leads to health, vigor, and superiority over other communities.

Questions and Answers:

1. Q: What is considered an essential attribute of the consecrated soul?
A: Purity and holiness are considered essential attributes of the consecrated soul.
2. Q: How does the letter describe the detrimental effects of tobacco?
A: Tobacco is described as dirty, smelly, offensive, harmful to health, and a waste of money and time.
3. Q: Why is opium considered foul and accursed?
A: Opium is considered foul and accursed due to its harmful and spiritually disconnecting nature.
4. Q: What is the consequence of using opium according to the letter?
A: Using opium is said to turn the living into the dead and to result in disconnection from the human kingdom.
5. Q: What are the benefits of avoiding harmful substances according to the letter?
A: Avoiding harmful substances contributes to health, cleanliness, and freedom from addiction, making the followers leaders in excellence.
6. Q: How does the letter emphasize the followers' role in setting an example?
A: The followers are urged to make a mighty effort to distinguish themselves through purity, sanctity, and leadership in all kinds of excellence.

O thou distinguished physician!... Praise be to God that thou hast two powers: one to undertake physical healing and the other spiritual healing. Matters related to man's spirit have a great effect on his bodily condition. For instance, thou shouldst impart gladness to thy patient, give him comfort and joy, and bring him to ecstasy and exultation. How often hath it occurred that this hath caused early recovery. Therefore, treat thou the sick with both powers. Spiritual feelings have a surprising effect on healing nervous ailments.

Summary:

The letter acknowledges the physician's dual powers in physical and spiritual healing. It emphasizes the interconnectedness of spiritual and physical well-being, highlighting the impact of spiritual feelings on healing nervous ailments. The physician is encouraged to impart gladness, comfort, and joy to patients, as such emotional states contribute to early recovery.

Key Points:

1. Acknowledgment of the physician's dual powers: physical healing and spiritual healing.
2. Emphasis on the significant impact of spiritual feelings on the healing process.
3. Recognition of the interconnectedness of spiritual and physical well-being.
4. Encouragement to treat patients with both physical and spiritual powers.
5. The importance of imparting gladness, comfort, and joy to patients for early recovery.
6. Reference to the surprising effect of spiritual feelings on healing nervous ailments.
7. Implicit guidance to integrate spiritual care with medical treatment for comprehensive healing.

Questions and Answers:

1. Q: According to the letter, what powers does the distinguished physician possess?
A: The distinguished physician has two powers: one for physical healing and the other for spiritual healing.
2. Q: How does spiritual well-being affect physical healing, as per the letter?
A: The letter suggests that spiritual feelings have a surprising effect on healing nervous ailments and contribute to overall physical recovery.
3. Q: What is the physician encouraged to impart to patients for their early recovery?
A: The physician is encouraged to impart gladness, comfort, and joy to patients for early recovery.
4. Q: How does the letter describe the impact of spiritual feelings on patients?
A: Spiritual feelings are described as having a great effect on the bodily condition of patients.
5. Q: What is the overall guidance given to the physician regarding the treatment of patients?
A: The physician is advised to treat patients with both physical and spiritual powers, recognizing the interconnectedness of spiritual and physical well-being.

When giving medical treatment turn to the Blessed Beauty, then follow the dictates of thy heart. Remedy the sick by means of heavenly joy and spiritual exultation, cure the sorely afflicted by imparting to them blissful glad tidings and heal the wounded through His resplendent bestowals.

When at the bedside of a patient, cheer and gladden his heart and enrapture his spirit through celestial power. Indeed, such a heavenly breath quickeneth every moldering bone and reviveth the spirit of every sick and ailing one.

Summary:

The letter advises the physician to turn to the Blessed Beauty when giving medical treatment. It emphasizes the role of heavenly joy, spiritual exultation, and imparting blissful glad tidings in remedying the sick. The directive is to uplift and enliven the spirit of patients through celestial power, believing that such a heavenly breath can revitalize the physical and spiritual well-being of the sick.

Key Points:

1. Guidance to turn to the Blessed Beauty when administering medical treatment.
2. Emphasis on the use of heavenly joy and spiritual exultation in the healing process.
3. Encouragement to impart blissful glad tidings to the sick for their remedy.
4. Direction to uplift and gladden the hearts of patients at their bedside.
5. Belief in the reviving power of celestial influence on both physical and spiritual aspects of the sick.

Questions and Answers:

1. Q: According to the letter, what is the physician advised to do when giving medical treatment?
A: The physician is advised to turn to the Blessed Beauty and follow the dictates of the heart when giving medical treatment.
2. Q: What role does heavenly joy and spiritual exultation play in the remedy of the sick?
A: The letter emphasizes the use of heavenly joy and spiritual exultation as part of the remedy for the sick.
3. Q: What is the directive regarding the communication of glad tidings to the sick?
A: The physician is encouraged to impart blissful glad tidings to the sick for their remedy.
4. Q: How does the letter describe the impact of a heavenly breath on the patients?
A: The letter suggests that a heavenly breath can quicken every moldering bone and revivify the spirit of the sick.
5. Q: What is the main belief underlying the advice given in the letter?
A: The belief is that celestial influence and heavenly elements have the power to revitalize both the physical and spiritual well-being of the sick.

Although ill health is one of the unavoidable conditions of man, truly it is hard to bear. The bounty of good health is the greatest of all gifts.

Summary:

The passage acknowledges that while ill health is an inevitable part of human existence, it is challenging to endure. It emphasizes the unparalleled value of the blessing of good health.

Key Points:

1. Acknowledgment that ill health is an inherent aspect of human life.
2. Recognition of the difficulty associated with bearing the burden of illness.
3. Assertion that the greatest gift is the bounty of good health.

Questions and Answers:

1. Q: What is stated about ill health in the passage?

A: The passage acknowledges that ill health is one of the unavoidable conditions of man.

2. Q: What does the passage emphasize regarding the experience of ill health?

A: It emphasizes that while ill health is inevitable, it is hard to bear.

3. Q: According to the passage, what is considered the greatest of all gifts?

A: The bounty of good health is considered the greatest of all gifts.

4. Q: How does the passage characterize the condition of man in relation to health?

A: The passage acknowledges that ill health is one of the unavoidable conditions of man.

5. Q: What aspect of health is highlighted as particularly challenging?

A: The passage points out the difficulty associated with bearing the burden of illness.

– 133 –

There are two ways of healing sickness, material means and spiritual means. The first is by the treatment of physicians; the second consisteth in prayers offered by the spiritual ones to God and in turning to Him. Both means should be used and practiced.

Illnesses which occur by reason of physical causes should be treated by doctors with medical remedies; those which are due to spiritual causes disappear through spiritual means. Thus an illness caused by affliction, fear, nervous impressions, will be healed more effectively by spiritual rather than by physical treatment. Hence, both kinds of treatment should be followed; they are not contradictory. Therefore thou shouldst also accept physical remedies inasmuch as these too have come from the mercy and favor of God, Who hath revealed and made manifest medical science so that His servants may profit from this kind of treatment also. Thou shouldst give equal attention to spiritual treatments, for they produce marvelous effects.

Now, if thou wishest to know the true remedy which will heal man from all sickness and will give him the health of the divine kingdom, know that it is the precepts and teachings of God. Focus thine attention upon them.

Summary:

The passage discusses two approaches to healing sickness: material means (treatment by physicians and medical remedies) and spiritual means (prayers and turning to God). It emphasizes

that both methods should be utilized, especially for illnesses rooted in both physical and spiritual causes. The ultimate remedy, it suggests, lies in following the precepts and teachings of God.

Key Points:

1. Two methods of healing: material means (doctors and medical remedies) and spiritual means (prayers and turning to God).
2. Both approaches should be used and are not contradictory.
3. Illnesses from physical causes should be treated physically; spiritual causes benefit more from spiritual treatment.
4. Acceptance of physical remedies as part of God's mercy, alongside spiritual treatments.
5. Emphasis on focusing attention on the precepts and teachings of God for ultimate healing.

Questions and Answers:

1. Q: What are the two ways of healing sickness mentioned in the passage?
A: Material means (treatment by physicians) and spiritual means (prayers and turning to God).
2. Q: How does the passage view the relationship between physical and spiritual treatments?
A: It states that both should be used and are not contradictory, with each method being effective for specific causes.
3. Q: According to the passage, what type of treatment is more effective for illnesses caused by affliction, fear, and nervous impressions?
A: Spiritual treatment is more effective for illnesses caused by spiritual factors.
4. Q: What does the passage suggest about the origin of medical science and remedies?
A: It suggests that medical science and remedies have come from the mercy and favor of God.
5. Q: What is identified as the true remedy for healing from all sickness in the passage?
A: The precepts and teachings of God are identified as the true remedy for ultimate healing.

– 134 –

O thou who art attracted to the fragrant breathings of God! I have read thy letter addressed to Mrs. Lua Getsinger. Thou hast indeed examined with great care the reasons for the incursion of disease into the human body. It is certainly the case that sins are a potent cause of physical ailments. If humankind were free from the defilements of sin and waywardness, and lived according to a natural, inborn equilibrium, without following wherever their passions led, it is undeniable that diseases would no longer take the ascendant, nor diversify with such intensity.

But man hath perversely continued to serve his lustful appetites, and he would not content himself with simple foods. Rather, he prepared for himself food that was compounded of many ingredients, of substances differing one from the other. With this, and with the perpetrating of vile and ignoble acts, his attention was engrossed, and he abandoned the temperance and moderation of a natural way of life. The result was the engendering of diseases both violent and diverse.

For the animal, as to its body, is made up of the same constituent elements as man. Since, however, the animal contenteth itself with simple foods and striveth not to indulge its importunate urges to any great degree, and committeth no sins, its ailments relative to man's are few. We see clearly, therefore, how powerful are sin and contumacy as pathogenic factors. And once

engendered these diseases become compounded, multiply, and are transmitted to others. Such are the spiritual, inner causes of sickness.

The outer, physical causal factor in disease, however, is a disturbance in the balance, the proportionate equilibrium of all those elements of which the human body is composed. To illustrate: the body of man is a compound of many constituent substances, each component being present in a prescribed amount, contributing to the essential equilibrium of the whole. So long as these constituents remain in their due proportion, according to the natural balance of the whole—that is, no component suffereth a change in its natural proportionate degree and balance, no component being either augmented or decreased—there will be no physical cause for the incursion of disease.

For example, the starch component must be present to a given amount, and the sugar to a given amount. So long as each remaineth in its natural proportion to the whole, there will be no cause for the onset of disease. When, however, these constituents vary as to their natural and due amounts—that is, when they are augmented or diminished—it is certain that this will provide for the inroads of disease.

This question requireth the most careful investigation. The Báb hath said that the people of Bahá must develop the science of medicine to such a high degree that they will heal illnesses by means of foods. The basic reason for this is that if, in some component substance of the human body, an imbalance should occur, altering its correct, relative proportion to the whole, this fact will inevitably result in the onset of disease. If, for example, the starch component should be unduly augmented, or the sugar component decreased, an illness will take control. It is the function of a skilled physician to determine which constituent of his patient's body hath suffered diminution, which hath been augmented. Once he hath discovered this, he must prescribe a food containing the diminished element in considerable amounts, to reestablish the body's essential equilibrium. The patient, once his constitution is again in balance, will be rid of his disease.

The proof of this is that while other animals have never studied medical science, nor carried on researches into diseases or medicines, treatments or cures—even so, when one of them falleth a prey to sickness, nature leadeth it, in fields or desert places, to the very plant which, once eaten, will rid the animal of its disease. The explanation is that if, as an example, the sugar component in the animal's body hath decreased, according to a natural law the animal hankereth after an herb that is rich in sugar. Then, by a natural urge, which is the appetite, among a thousand different varieties of plants across the field, the animal will discover and consume that herb which containeth a sugar component in large amounts. Thus the essential balance of the substances composing its body is reestablished, and the animal is rid of its disease.

This question requireth the most careful investigation. When highly skilled physicians shall fully examine this matter, thoroughly and perseveringly, it will be clearly seen that the incursion of disease is due to a disturbance in the relative amounts of the body's component substances, and that treatment consisteth in adjusting these relative amounts, and that this can be apprehended and made possible by means of foods.

It is certain that in this wonderful new age the development of medical science will lead to the doctors' healing their patients with foods. For the sense of sight, the sense of hearing, of taste, of smell, of touch—all these are discriminative faculties, their purpose being to separate the beneficial from whatever causeth harm. Now, is it possible that man's sense of smell, the sense that differentiates odors, should find some odor repugnant, and that odor be beneficial to the human body? Absurd! Impossible! In the same way, could the human body, through the faculty of sight—the differentiator among things visible—benefit from gazing upon a revolting mass of excrement?

Never! Again, if the sense of taste, likewise a faculty that selecteth and rejecteth, be offended by something, that thing is certainly not beneficial; and if, at the outset, it may yield some advantage, in the long run its harmfulness will be established.

And likewise, when the constitution is in a state of equilibrium, there is no doubt that whatever is relished will be beneficial to health. Observe how an animal will graze in a field where there are a hundred thousand kinds of herbs and grasses, and how, with its sense of smell, it snuffeth up the odors of the plants, and tasteth them with its sense of taste; then it consumeth whatever herb is pleasurable to these senses, and benefiteth therefrom. Were it not for this power of selectivity, the animals would all be dead in a single day; for there are a great many poisonous plants, and animals know nothing of the pharmacopoeia. And yet, observe what a reliable set of scales they have, by means of which to differentiate the good from the injurious. Whatever constituent of their body hath decreased, they can rehabilitate by seeking out and consuming some plant that hath an abundant store of that diminished element; and thus the equilibrium of their bodily components is reestablished, and they are rid of their disease.

At whatever time highly skilled physicians shall have developed the healing of illnesses by means of foods, and shall make provision for simple foods, and shall prohibit humankind from living as slaves to their lustful appetites, it is certain that the incidence of chronic and diversified illnesses will abate, and the general health of all mankind will be much improved. This is destined to come about. In the same way, in the character, the conduct and the manners of men, universal modifications will be made.

Summary:

The passage delves into the causes of disease, distinguishing between spiritual and physical factors. Spiritual causes include sins and waywardness, while physical causes stem from imbalances in the body's constituent elements. It emphasizes the importance of maintaining the natural equilibrium of these elements and proposes the development of the science of medicine to

heal illnesses through foods. The text envisions a future where skilled physicians use dietary adjustments to treat diseases and improve the overall health of humanity.

Key Points:

1. Spiritual Causes of Disease:

- Sins and waywardness are potent causes of physical ailments.
- The people's indulgence in lustful appetites and deviation from a natural, balanced life contribute to the engendering of diseases.

2. Physical Causes of Disease:

- Imbalances in the body's constituent elements lead to disease.
- Maintaining the natural equilibrium of these elements prevents the onset of disease.

3. The Role of Skilled Physicians:

- Physicians must determine imbalances and prescribe foods containing the diminished element to restore equilibrium.
- The Báb's vision that the people of Bahá must develop the science of medicine to heal illnesses through foods.

4. Natural Responses to Disease:

- Animals instinctively seek out specific plants to address imbalances in their bodies.
- The natural selectivity of animals prevents them from consuming harmful substances.

5. Future Development of Medicine:

- Highly skilled physicians will heal patients with foods, focusing on dietary adjustments.
- The development of medical science will lead to improved health by preventing the overindulgence of lustful appetites.

Questions and Answers:

1. Q: What are the spiritual causes of disease mentioned in the passage?

A: Sins and waywardness, indulgence in lustful appetites, and deviation from a natural, balanced life.

2. Q: How does the passage describe the physical causes of disease?

A: Imbalances in the body's constituent elements lead to disease.

3. Q: According to the text, what is the role of skilled physicians in treating diseases?

A: Physicians must determine imbalances and prescribe foods to restore the body's essential equilibrium.

4. Q: How do animals naturally respond to diseases, according to the passage?

A: Animals instinctively seek out specific plants that contain elements addressing imbalances in their bodies.

5. Q: What is the envisioned future role of highly skilled physicians in the development of medicine?

A: Physicians will heal patients with foods, using dietary adjustments to prevent overindulgence and improve overall health.

– 135 –

According to the explicit decree of Bahá'u'lláh one must not turn aside from the advice of a competent doctor. It is imperative to consult one even if the patient himself be a well-known and eminent physician. In short, the point is that you should maintain your health by consulting a highly skilled physician.

Summary:

The passage emphasizes the importance of consulting competent doctors and following their advice, as mandated by Bahá'u'lláh. It stresses that even if the patient is a well-known physician, they should seek professional medical advice for the maintenance of their health.

Key Points:**1. Mandatory Consultation:**

- Following the explicit decree of Bahá'u'lláh, consulting a competent doctor is imperative.
- The obligation to seek medical advice applies even if the patient is a skilled physician.

2. Maintenance of Health:

- The primary purpose is to maintain health through professional medical consultation.
- The passage underscores the significance of adhering to the guidance of a highly skilled physician.

Questions and Answers:

1. Q: What is the key mandate emphasized in the passage?

A: The explicit decree of Bahá'u'lláh emphasizes the necessity of consulting a competent doctor for health-related matters.

2. Q: How does the passage view seeking medical advice for one's health?

A: Seeking professional medical advice is considered imperative for the maintenance of health.

3. Q: Does the obligation to consult a competent doctor apply even if the patient is a skilled physician?

A: Yes, the passage explicitly states that one must consult a doctor even if the patient is a well-known and eminent physician.

4. Q: According to Bahá'u'lláh's decree, what is the primary purpose of consulting a highly skilled physician?

A: The primary purpose is to maintain health and adhere to the guidance of a competent medical professional.

5. Q: What principle does the passage stress regarding health maintenance?

A: The passage stresses the principle of maintaining health by following the advice of a highly skilled physician, in accordance with the explicit decree of Bahá'u'lláh.

It is incumbent upon everyone to seek medical treatment and to follow the doctor's instructions, for this is in compliance with the divine ordinance, but, in reality, He Who giveth healing is God.

Summary:

The passage highlights the obligation for everyone to seek medical treatment and follow the doctor's instructions as compliance with divine ordinance. However, it asserts that true healing comes from God.

Key Points:**1. Obligation to Seek Medical Treatment:**

- Emphasis on the duty of everyone to seek medical treatment.
- Compliance with divine ordinance is stressed in following the instructions of doctors.

2. Ultimate Source of Healing:

- Acknowledgment that, in reality, the true source of healing is God.
- While seeking medical treatment is encouraged, the ultimate healer is divine.

Questions and Answers:

1. Q: What does the passage emphasize regarding seeking medical treatment?

A: The passage underscores the obligation for everyone to seek medical treatment.

2. Q: In compliance with what is seeking medical treatment considered?

A: Seeking medical treatment is considered compliance with divine ordinance.

3. Q: According to the passage, where does true healing come from?

A: True healing is stated to come from God in reality.

4. Q: What is the dual emphasis in the passage regarding health?

A: The passage emphasizes both seeking medical treatment and recognizing God as the ultimate source of healing.

5. Q: How does the passage view the role of doctors in the healing process?

A: While seeking medical treatment and following doctor's instructions are encouraged, the passage acknowledges that true healing ultimately comes from God.

– 137 –

O thou who art voicing the praises of thy Lord! I have read thy letter, wherein thou didst express astonishment at some of the laws of God, such as that concerning the hunting of innocent animals, creatures who are guilty of no wrong.

Be thou not surprised at this. Reflect upon the inner realities of the universe, the secret wisdoms involved, the enigmas, the interrelationships, the rules that govern all. For every part of the universe is connected with every other part by ties that are very powerful and admit of no imbalance, nor any slackening whatever. In the physical realm of creation, all things are eaters and eaten: the plant drinketh in the mineral, the animal doth crop and swallow down the plant, man doth feed upon the animal, and the mineral devoureth the body of man. Physical bodies are transferred past one barrier after another, from one life to another, and all things are subject to transformation and change, save only the essence of existence itself—since it is constant and

immutable, and upon it is founded the life of every species and kind, of every contingent reality throughout the whole of creation.

Whensoever thou dost examine, through a microscope, the water man drinketh, the air he doth breathe, thou wilt see that with every breath of air, man taketh in an abundance of animal life, and with every draught of water, he also swalloweth down a great variety of animals. How could it ever be possible to put a stop to this process? For all creatures are eaters and eaten, and the very fabric of life is reared upon this fact. Were it not so, the ties that interlace all created things within the universe would be unraveled.

And further, whensoever a thing is destroyed, and decayeth, and is cut off from life, it is promoted into a world that is greater than the world it knew before. It leaveth, for example, the life of the mineral and goeth forward into the life of the plant; then it departeth out of the vegetable life and ascendeth into that of the animal, following which it forsaketh the life of the animal and riseth into the realm of human life, and this is out of the grace of thy Lord, the Merciful, the Compassionate.

I beg of God that He will assist thee to comprehend the mysteries that lie at the heart of creation, and will draw away the veil from before thine eyes and thy sister's, that the well-guarded secret may be disclosed unto thee, and the hidden mystery be revealed as clear as the sun at noonday; that He will aid thy sister and thy husband to enter the Kingdom of God, and will heal thee of every ill, whether physical or spiritual, that assaileth one in this life.

Summary:

The passage addresses astonishment at certain laws of God, particularly those related to the hunting of innocent animals. It urges reflection on the intricate connections and balance in the universe. The interconnectedness of all living beings is emphasized, with examples from the consumption

of animals and plants. The cyclic nature of life, decay, and progression through different forms is discussed, highlighting the constant transformation inherent in existence.

Key Points:

1. Interconnectedness in the Universe:

- The universe operates through powerful, interconnected ties.
- All parts of creation are linked, and imbalance is not possible.

2. Consumption in the Physical Realm:

- Every part of the universe is involved in the consumption of others.
- The example of various life forms consuming each other is given.

3. Transformation and Change:

- Physical bodies undergo transformation and change.
- The essence of existence remains constant and immutable.

4. Life Beyond Decay:

- When a life form is destroyed or decays, it progresses into a greater world.
- The cycle involves transitions from mineral to plant, plant to animal, and so on.

5. Prayer and Healing:

- A prayer is expressed for understanding the mysteries of creation.
- The hope for healing, comprehension of hidden mysteries, and entry into the Kingdom of God are conveyed.

Questions and Answers:

1. Q: What does the passage suggest about the interconnectedness of all living beings?

A: It emphasizes the interconnectedness of all things in the universe through powerful ties.

2. Q: How does the passage illustrate the consumption of living beings in the physical realm?

A: It provides examples of the consumption of animals and plants in the cycle of life.

3. Q: What is the significance of transformation and change in the context of the passage?

A: The passage highlights the constant transformation and change in physical bodies while emphasizing the constancy of the essence of existence.

4. Q: What does the passage say about life progressing beyond decay?

A: It discusses how life forms progress into greater worlds after destruction or decay.

5. Q: What is the prayer expressed in the passage?

A: The prayer seeks understanding of the mysteries of creation, healing, and the entry into the Kingdom of God.

O ye beloved of the Lord! The Kingdom of God is founded upon equity and justice, and also upon mercy, compassion, and kindness to every living soul. Strive ye then with all your heart to treat

compassionately all humankind—except for those who have some selfish, private motive, or some disease of the soul. Kindness cannot be shown the tyrant, the deceiver, or the thief, because, far from awakening them to the error of their ways, it maketh them to continue in their perversity as before. No matter how much kindliness ye may expend upon the liar, he will but lie the more, for he believeth you to be deceived, while ye understand him but too well, and only remain silent out of your extreme compassion.

Briefly, it is not only their fellow human beings that the beloved of God must treat with mercy and compassion, rather must they show forth the utmost loving-kindness to every living creature. For in all physical respects, and where the animal spirit is concerned, the selfsame feelings are shared by animal and man. Man hath not grasped this truth, however, and he believeth that physical sensations are confined to human beings, wherefore is he unjust to the animals, and cruel.

And yet in truth, what difference is there when it cometh to physical sensations? The feelings are one and the same, whether ye inflict pain on man or on beast. There is no difference here whatever. And indeed ye do worse to harm an animal, for man hath a language, he can lodge a complaint, he can cry out and moan; if injured he can have recourse to the authorities and these will protect him from his aggressor. But the hapless beast is mute, able neither to express its hurt nor take its case to the authorities. If a man inflict a thousand ills upon a beast, it can neither ward him off with speech nor hale him into court. Therefore is it essential that ye show forth the utmost consideration to the animal, and that ye be even kinder to him than to your fellow man.

Train your children from their earliest days to be infinitely tender and loving to animals. If an animal be sick, let the children try to heal it, if it be hungry, let them feed it, if thirsty, let them quench its thirst, if weary, let them see that it rests.

Most human beings are sinners, but the beasts are innocent. Surely those without sin should receive the most kindness and love—all except animals which are harmful, such as bloodthirsty wolves, such as poisonous snakes, and similar pernicious creatures, the reason being that kindness to these is an injustice to human beings and to other animals as well. If, for example, ye be tenderhearted toward a wolf, this is but tyranny to a sheep, for a wolf will destroy a whole flock of sheep. A rabid dog, if given the chance, can kill a thousand animals and men. Therefore, compassion shown to wild and ravening beasts is cruelty to the peaceful ones—and so the harmful must be dealt with. But to blessed animals the utmost kindness must be shown, the more the better. Tenderness and loving-kindness are basic principles of God's heavenly Kingdom. Ye should most carefully bear this matter in mind.

Summary:

The passage emphasizes the foundations of the Kingdom of God: equity, justice, mercy, compassion, and kindness. It encourages treating all humankind with compassion, excluding those with selfish motives or diseased souls. The distinction between physical sensations in humans and animals is challenged, urging kindness to all living creatures. The importance of showing utmost consideration and kindness to animals is stressed, surpassing that shown to fellow humans. Training children to be tender and loving to animals from an early age is advocated. The innocence

of animals and the potential harm of certain creatures are considered in determining the appropriate treatment.

Key Points:

1. Foundations of the Kingdom of God:

- The Kingdom is built on equity, justice, mercy, compassion, and kindness.
- Striving to treat all humankind with compassion is emphasized.

2. Physical Sensations and Treatment of Animals:

- Physical sensations are shared by both humans and animals.
- Unjust treatment of animals is highlighted, urging greater kindness to them than to fellow humans.

3. Consideration for Animals:

- Mute animals deserve utmost consideration and kindness.
- The comparison of man's ability to express hurt versus animals is explored.

4. Training Children and Kindness to Animals:

- Encouragement to train children to be tender and loving to animals.
- Actions to take when animals are sick, hungry, thirsty, or weary.

5. Dealing with Harmful Animals:

- Compassion must be shown to blessed animals, excluding harmful ones.
- Harmful animals must be dealt with to prevent harm to humans and other animals.

Questions and Answers:

1. Q: According to the passage, what are the foundational principles of the Kingdom of God?

A: The Kingdom is built upon equity, justice, mercy, compassion, and kindness.

2. Q: How does the passage challenge the notion of differentiating physical sensations between humans and animals?

A: It argues that physical sensations are the same for both humans and animals.

3. Q: Why does the passage advocate greater kindness to animals than to fellow humans?

A: Animals are considered innocent and lack the ability to express their hurt or seek help.

4. Q: What actions does the passage suggest when animals are sick, hungry, thirsty, or weary?

A: Children are encouraged to try to heal sick animals, feed hungry ones, quench their thirst, and ensure they rest when weary.

5. Q: According to the passage, why should harmful animals be dealt with differently than blessed animals?

A: Compassion is shown to blessed animals, while harmful ones must be dealt with to prevent harm to humans and other animals.

O thou handmaid of God! The heavenly glad tidings must be delivered with the utmost dignity and magnanimity. And until a soul ariseth with qualities which are essential for the bearer of these tidings, his words will take no effect.

O bondswoman of God! The human spirit possesseth wondrous powers, but it should be reinforced by the Holy Spirit. What thou hearest other than this is pure imagination. If, however, it be assisted by the bounty of the Holy Spirit, then will its strength be a thing to marvel at. Then will that human spirit uncover realities, and unravel mysteries. Turn thy heart fully to the Holy Spirit, and invite others to do the same; then shall ye witness wonderful results.

O handmaid of God! The stars in the sky do not exert any spiritual influence on this world of dust; but all the members and parts of the universe are very strongly linked together in that limitless space, and this connection produceth a reciprocity of material effects. Outside the bounty of the Holy Spirit, whatsoever thou hearest as to the effect of trances, or the mediums' trumpets, conveying the singing voices of the dead, is imagination pure and simple. As to the bounty of the Holy Spirit, however, relate whatsoever thou wilt—it cannot be overstated; believe, therefore, whatsoever thou hearest of this. But the persons referred to, the trumpet-people, are entirely shut out from this bounty and receive no portion thereof; their way is an illusion.

O handmaid of God! Prayers are granted through the universal Manifestations of God. Nevertheless, where the wish is to obtain material things, even where the heedless are concerned, if they supplicate, humbly imploring God's help—even their prayer hath an effect.

O handmaid of God! Although the reality of Divinity is sanctified and boundless, the aims and needs of the creatures are restricted. God's grace is like the rain that cometh down from heaven: the water is not bounded by the limitations of form, yet on whatever place it poureth down, it taketh on limitations—dimensions, appearance, shape—according to the characteristics of that place. In a square pool, the water, previously unconfined, becometh a square; in a six-sided pool it becometh a hexagon, in an eight-sided pool an octagon, and so forth. The rain itself hath no geometry, no limits, no form, but it taketh on one form or another, according to the restrictions of its vessel. In the same way, the Holy Essence of the Lord God is boundless, immeasurable, but His graces and splendors become finite in the creatures, because of their limitations, wherefore the prayers of given persons will receive favorable answers in certain cases.

O handmaid of God! It is with the Lord Christ even as with Adam. Did the first human being who came into existence on this earth have a father or mother? It is certain that he had neither. But Christ lacked only a father.

O handmaid of God! The prayers which were revealed to ask for healing apply both to physical and spiritual healing. Recite them, then, to heal both the soul and the body. If healing is right for the patient, it will certainly be granted; but for some ailing persons, healing would only be the cause of other ills, and therefore wisdom doth not permit an affirmative answer to the prayer.

O handmaid of God! The power of the Holy Spirit healeth both physical and spiritual ailments.

O handmaid of God! It is recorded in the Torah: And I will give you the valley of Achor for a door of hope. This valley of Achor is the city of 'Akká, and whoso hath interpreted this otherwise is of those who know not.

Summary:

The passage conveys guidance on delivering the heavenly glad tidings with dignity and magnanimity, emphasizing the essential qualities required for effective delivery. It underscores the wondrous powers of the human spirit, emphasizing the need for reinforcement by the Holy Spirit. Material effects are discussed in connection with the universe's reciprocity of components. The

limitations of human understanding are highlighted concerning phenomena like trances and mediums. The role of prayer, the boundless nature of God's grace, and the application of prayers

for both physical and spiritual healing are explored. The passage also touches upon the nature of Christ's existence and references the valley of Achor as the city of 'Akká.

Key Points:

1. Effective Delivery of Glad Tidings:

- Heavenly glad tidings should be delivered with dignity and magnanimity.
- Essential qualities are required for effective delivery.

2. Wondrous Powers of the Human Spirit:

- The human spirit possesses wondrous powers, reinforced by the Holy Spirit.
- Without the Holy Spirit, claims of spiritual influence are considered imagination.

3. Reciprocity in the Universe:

- Stars in the sky do not exert spiritual influence, but components in the universe have reciprocal material effects.

4. Prayers and Healing:

- Prayers are granted through universal Manifestations of God.
- Prayers can have an effect on material matters if supplicated with humility.
- The Holy Essence is boundless, but graces become finite in creatures due to limitations.
- Prayers for healing apply to both physical and spiritual healing.

5. Christ's Existence and Valley of Achor:

- Christ lacked only a father, similar to Adam.
- The valley of Achor is identified as the city of 'Akká in the Torah.

Questions and Answers:

1. Q: What qualities does the passage emphasize for the effective delivery of heavenly glad tidings?

A: Delivery should be done with dignity and magnanimity, requiring essential qualities.

2. Q: How are the wondrous powers of the human spirit reinforced, according to the passage?

A: The human spirit is reinforced by the Holy Spirit.

3. Q: What are the considerations regarding the limitations of human understanding concerning phenomena like trances and mediums?

A: The passage suggests that such phenomena are imagination without the bounty of the Holy Spirit.

4. Q: How does the passage describe the boundless nature of God's grace?

A: God's grace is compared to rain that, though unbounded, takes on limitations based on the vessel it pours into.

5. Q: What is the significance of the valley of Achor mentioned in the passage?

A: The valley of Achor is identified as the city of 'Akká in the Torah, and its interpretation is clarified.

Thou didst ask as to the transfiguration of Jesus, with Moses and Elias and the Heavenly Father on Mount Tabor, as referred to in the Bible. This occurrence was perceived by the disciples with their inner eye, wherefore it was a secret hidden away, and was a spiritual discovery of theirs. Otherwise, if the intent be that they witnessed physical forms, that is, witnessed that transfiguration with their outward eyes, then there were many others at hand on that plain and mountain, and why did they fail to behold it? And why did the Lord charge them that they should tell no man? It is clear that this was a spiritual vision and a scene of the Kingdom. Wherefore did the Messiah bid them to keep this hidden, “till the Son of Man were risen from the dead,”¹—that is, until the Cause of God should be exalted, and the Word of God prevail, and the reality of Christ rise up.

Summary:

The passage addresses a question about the transfiguration of Jesus on Mount Tabor, particularly whether it was a physical or spiritual event. It clarifies that the disciples perceived it with their inner, spiritual eye. If it had been a physical manifestation, others present would have witnessed it. The secrecy surrounding the event is explained as a spiritual vision related to the Kingdom. The

Messiah instructed the disciples to keep it hidden until the Cause of God is exalted and the reality of Christ rises.

Key Points:

1. Nature of the Transfiguration:

- The disciples perceived the transfiguration with their inner, spiritual eye.
- Clarification that it was not a physical event witnessed with outward eyes.

2. Secrecy and Spiritual Vision:

- If it had been physical, others present would have seen it, questioning the spiritual nature.
- The secrecy surrounding the event is explained as a spiritual vision related to the Kingdom.

3. Instructions from the Messiah:

- The disciples were instructed not to tell anyone about the transfiguration.
- The reason for secrecy is associated with the rising of the Son of Man, symbolizing the exaltation of the Cause of God.

4. Timing of Revelation:

- The Messiah directed them to keep it hidden "till the Son of Man were risen from the dead."
- The rising from the dead is interpreted as the exaltation of the Cause of God and the prevailing of the Word of God.

Questions and Answers:

1. Q: How did the disciples perceive the transfiguration of Jesus on Mount Tabor?

A: They perceived it with their inner, spiritual eye.

2. Q: Why would the presence of others witnessing the event contradict the spiritual nature of the transfiguration?

A: If it were a physical manifestation, others present would also have witnessed it, raising questions about its spiritual nature.

3. Q: What is the explanation for the secrecy surrounding the transfiguration event?

A: The secrecy is explained as a spiritual vision related to the Kingdom.

4. Q: Why did the Messiah instruct the disciples not to tell anyone about the transfiguration?

A: The reason is associated with the rising of the Son of Man, symbolizing the exaltation of the Cause of God.

5. Q: How is the rising from the dead interpreted in the context of the transfiguration event?

A: It is interpreted as the exaltation of the Cause of God and the prevailing of the Word of God.

O thou yearning flame, thou who art afire with the love of God! I have read thy letter, and its contents, well-expressed and eloquent, delighted my heart, showing as they did thy deep sincerity in the Cause of God, thy persevering steps along the pathway of His Kingdom, and thy staunchness in His Faith—for of all great things, this is the greatest in His sight.

How many a soul hath turned itself unto the Lord and entered into the protective shadow of His Word, and become famed throughout the world—for example, Judas Iscariot. And then, when the tests grew harsh and the violence thereof intensified, their feet slipped on the pathway and they turned backward from the Faith after having acknowledged its truth, and they denied it, and fell away from harmony and love into mischief and hate. Thus became visible the power of tests, which maketh mighty pillars to tremble and shake.

Judas Iscariot was the greatest of the disciples, and he summoned the people to Christ. Then it seemed to him that Jesus was showing increasing regard to the Apostle Peter, and when Jesus said, “Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build My church,” these words addressed to Peter, and this singling out of Peter for special honor, had a marked effect on the Apostle, and kindled envy within the heart of Judas. For this reason he who had once drawn nigh did turn aside, and he who had believed in the Faith denied it, and his love changed to hate, until he became a cause of the crucifixion of that glorious Lord, that manifest Splendor. Such is the outcome of envy, the chief reason why men turn aside from the Straight Path. So hath it occurred, and will occur, in this great Cause. But it doth not matter, for it engendereth loyalty in the rest, and maketh souls to arise who waver not, who are fixed and unshakable as the mountains in their love for the Manifest Light.

Convey thou unto the handmaids of the Merciful the message that when a test turneth violent they must stand unmoved, and faithful to their love for Bahá. In winter come the storms, and the great winds blow, but then will follow spring in all its beauty, adorning hill and plain with perfumed plants and red anemones, fair to see. Then will the birds trill out upon the branches their songs of joy, and sermonize in lilting tones from the pulpits of the trees. Erelong shall ye bear witness that the lights are streaming forth, the banners of the realm above are waving, the sweet scents of the All-Merciful are wafted abroad, the hosts of the Kingdom are marching down, the angels of heaven are rushing forward, and the Holy Spirit is breathing upon all those regions. On that day thou shalt behold the waverers, men and women alike, frustrated of their hopes and in manifest loss. This is decreed by the Lord, the Revealer of Verses.

As to thee, blessed art thou, for thou art steadfast in the Cause of God, firm in His Covenant. I beg of Him to bestow upon thee a spiritual soul, and the life of the Kingdom, and to make thee a leaf verdant and flourishing on the Tree of Life, that thou mayest serve the handmaids of the Merciful with spirituality and good cheer.

Thy generous Lord will assist thee to labor in His vineyard and will cause thee to be the means of spreading the spirit of unity among His handmaids. He will make thine inner eye to see with the light of knowledge, He will forgive thy sins and transform them into goodly deeds. Verily He is the Forgiving, the Compassionate, the Lord of immeasurable grace.

Summary:

The letter commends the recipient for their sincere dedication to the Cause of God, highlighting the importance of steadfastness amidst tests. The example of Judas Iscariot turning away due to envy is cited. The essence of the message is to remain unmoved and faithful in the face of tests. It assures that after the storms of tests, a spiritual spring will follow, bringing forth beauty and joy.

The recipient is blessed for their steadfastness, and prayers are offered for spiritual growth, service in God's vineyard, and the spreading of unity among the believers.

Key Points:

1. Acknowledgment of Sincerity:

- The recipient's deep sincerity, perseverance, and staunchness in the Cause of God are commended.

2. Lesson from Judas Iscariot:

- Judas Iscariot is cited as an example of one who turned away from the Faith due to envy.
- Envy is identified as a cause for turning aside from the Straight Path.

3. Steadfastness in Tests:

- Encouragement to stand unmoved and faithful to love for Bahá, especially during violent tests.
- The analogy of storms in winter preceding the beauty of spring is used to convey the temporary nature of tests.

4. Promise of Spiritual Spring:

- After tests, a spiritual spring will follow, symbolizing beauty, joy, and the flourishing of the Cause.
- The image of banners, lights, and the Holy Spirit's influence is depicted.

5. Blessings and Prayers:

- The recipient is blessed for their steadfastness and firmness in God's Covenant.
- Prayers are offered for a spiritual soul, life in the Kingdom, and the ability to serve with spirituality and good cheer.
- God is invoked for assistance, knowledge, forgiveness, and transformation of sins into good deeds.

Questions and Answers:

1. Q: What example is given to illustrate the impact of envy in turning away from the Faith?

A: The example of Judas Iscariot is cited.

2. Q: How is the analogy of storms and spring used to convey the nature of tests?

A: Winter storms symbolize tests, and spring represents the subsequent beauty and joy after enduring tests.

3. Q: What encouragement is provided for those facing violent tests?

A: The recipients are encouraged to stand unmoved and faithful to their love for Bahá.

4. Q: What promises follow the analogy of spring in the letter?

A: Promises include the emergence of spiritual beauty, the waving of banners, and the influence of the Holy Spirit.

5. Q: What prayers are offered for the recipient?

A: Prayers include seeking a spiritual soul, life in the Kingdom, the ability to serve with spirituality and good cheer, and forgiveness and transformation of sins into good deeds.

– 142 –

O thou dear handmaid of God! Praise thou God, because thou art favored at His Holy Threshold, and cherished in the Kingdom of His might. Thou art the head of an assembly which is the very imprint of the Company on high, the mirror image of the all-glorious realm. Strive thou with heart and soul, in prayerful humility and self-effacement, to uphold the Law of God and spread His sweet savors abroad. Endeavor thou to become the true president of the assemblies of spiritual souls, and a companion to the angels in the realm of the All-Merciful.

Thou didst ask as to the tenth to the seventeenth verses of the twenty-first chapter of Saint John the Divine's Revelation. Know thou that according to mathematical principles, the firmament of this earth's brilliant daystar hath been divided among twelve constellations, which they call the twelve zodiacal signs. In the same way, the Sun of Truth shineth out from and sheddeth its bounties through twelve stations of holiness, and by these heavenly signs are meant those stainless and unsullied personages who are the very wellsprings of sanctity, and the dawning-points proclaiming the oneness of God.

Consider how in the days of the Interlocutor (Moses), there were twelve holy beings who were leaders of the twelve tribes; and likewise in the dispensation of the Spirit (Christ), note that there were twelve Apostles gathered within the sheltering shade of that supernal Light, and from those splendid dawning-points the Sun of Truth shone forth even as the sun in the sky. Again, in the days of Muḥammad, observe that there were twelve dawning-points of holiness, the manifestors of God's confirming help. Such is the way of it.

Accordingly did Saint John the Divine tell of twelve gates in his vision, and twelve foundations. By "that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God" is meant the holy Law of God, and this is set forth in many Tablets and still to be read in the Scriptures of the Prophets of the past: for instance, that Jerusalem was seen going out into the wilderness.

The meaning of the passage is that this heavenly Jerusalem hath twelve gates, through which the blessed enter into the City of God. These gates are souls who are as guiding stars, as portals of knowledge and grace; and within these gates there stand twelve angels. By "angel" is meant the power of the confirmations of God—that the candle of God's confirming power shineth out from the lamp-niche of those souls—meaning that every one of those beings will be granted the most vehement confirming support.

These twelve gates surround the entire world, that is they are a shelter for all creatures. And further, these twelve gates are the foundation of the City of God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and on each one of these foundations is written the name of one of the Apostles of Christ. That is to say, each one maketh manifest the perfections, the joyous message, and the excellency of that holy Being.

In brief, the Scripture saith: "And he that talked with me had a rod made out of gold, that is, a measure, wherewith he measured the city and the gates thereof and the towers thereof." The meaning is that certain personages guided the people with a staff grown out of the earth, and shepherded them with a rod, like unto the rod of Moses. Others trained and shepherded the people with a rod of iron, as in the Dispensation of Muḥammad. And in this present cycle, because it is the mightiest of Dispensations, that rod grown out of the vegetable kingdom and that rod of iron will be transformed into a rod of purest gold, taken from out the endless treasure houses in the Kingdom of the Lord. By this rod will the people be trained.

Note well the difference: at one time the Teachings of God were as a staff, and by this means the Holy Scriptures were spread abroad, the Law of God was promulgated and His Faith established. Then followed a time when the staff of the true Shepherd was as iron. And today, in this new and splendid age, the rod is even as pure gold. How wide is the difference here! Know, then, how much ground hath been gained by the Law of God and His Teachings in this dispensation, how they have reached such heights that they far transcend the dispensations gone before: truly this rod is purest gold, while those of other days were of iron and wood.

This is a brief answer that hath been written for thee, because there was no time for more. It is certain that thou wilt forgive me. The handmaids of God must rise to such a station that they will, by themselves and unaided, comprehend these inner meanings, and be able to expound at full length every single word; a station where, out of the truth of their inmost hearts, a spring of wisdom will well up, and jet forth even as a fountain that leapeth from its own original source.

Summary:

The letter praises the recipient as favored at God's Holy Threshold, guiding an assembly as a mirror image of the heavenly realm. The recipient is encouraged to uphold God's Law, spread His sweet savors, and become a true president of spiritual assemblies. The explanation of the twelfth zodiacal signs and their significance in the Bible's Revelation is provided. The twelve gates of the heavenly Jerusalem represent souls as guiding stars, and the twelve foundations are associated with the

Apostles of Christ. The transformative nature of the rod, symbolizing divine guidance, is discussed, emphasizing the current Dispensation's superiority.

Key Points:

1. Commendation and Encouragement:

- The recipient is praised for being favored at God's Holy Threshold and leading an assembly mirroring the heavenly realm.
- Encouragement is given to uphold God's Law, spread His sweet saviors, and become a true president of spiritual assemblies.

2. Interpretation of the Twelfth Zodiacal Signs:

- The firmament of the earth's daystar is divided into twelve constellations, representing the twelve zodiacal signs.
- The Sun of Truth shines through twelve stations of holiness, symbolized by stainless and unsullied personages.

3. Twelve Leaders in Past Dispensations:

- Twelve holy beings led the twelve tribes in Moses's time.
- Twelve Apostles were gathered around Christ.
- In Muhammad's dispensation, there were twelve dawning-points of holiness.

4. Symbolism of the Heavenly Jerusalem:

- The heavenly Jerusalem represents the holy Law of God, descending from heaven.
- Twelve gates symbolize souls as guiding stars, and twelve foundations represent the Apostles of Christ.

5. Transformation of the Rod:

- The rod of divine guidance is compared to a staff grown out of the earth, a rod of iron, and a rod of purest gold.
- In the current Dispensation, the rod is depicted as purest gold, signifying its transformative nature.

6. Expectation from the Recipient:

- The recipients are expected to rise to a station where they comprehend inner meanings independently and expound on them from the truth of their hearts.

Questions and Answers:

1. Q: What is the recipient encouraged to do in the letter?

A: The recipient is encouraged to uphold God's Law, spread His sweet saviors, and become a true president of spiritual assemblies.

2. Q: What do the twelve gates of the heavenly Jerusalem symbolize?

A: The twelve gates symbolize souls as guiding stars, each granted vehement confirming support, and they surround the entire world as a shelter for all creatures.

3. Q: What does the transformation of the rod symbolize?

A: The rod, symbolizing divine guidance, transforms from a staff grown out of the earth and a rod of iron to a rod of purest gold, signifying the mightiest Dispensation.

4. Q: What expectations are set for the recipients?

A: The recipients are expected to rise to a station where they independently comprehend inner meanings and expound on them with wisdom and understanding.

5. Q: How does the letter emphasize the current Dispensation?

A: The letter highlights the transformative nature of the rod, symbolizing divine guidance, and contrasts it with the rods of previous dispensations made of iron and wood. The current rod is described as purest gold.

– 143 –

O thou who hast drawn nigh unto the spirit of Christ in the Kingdom of God! Verily the body is composed of physical elements, and every composite must needs be decomposed. The spirit, however, is a single essence, fine and delicate, incorporeal, everlasting, and of God. For this reason whoso looketh for Christ in His physical body hath looked in vain, and will be shut away from Him as by a veil. But whoso yearneth to find Him in the spirit will grow from day to day in joy and desire and burning love, in closeness to Him, and in beholding Him clear and plain. In this new and wondrous day, it behooveth thee to seek after the spirit of Christ.

Verily the heaven into which the Messiah rose up was not this unending sky, rather was His heaven the Kingdom of His beneficent Lord. Even as He Himself hath said, “I came down from heaven,”¹ and again, “The Son of Man is in heaven.”² Hence it is clear that His heaven is beyond all directional points; it encircleth all existence, and is raised up for those who worship God. Beg and implore thy Lord to lift thee up into that heaven, and give thee to eat of its food, in this age of majesty and might.

Know thou that the people, even unto this day, have failed to unravel the hidden secrets of the Book. They imagine that Christ was excluded from His heaven in the days when He walked the earth, that He fell from the heights of His sublimity, and afterwards mounted to those upper reaches of the sky, to the heaven which doth not exist at all, for it is but space. And they are waiting for Him to come down from there again, riding upon a cloud, and they imagine that there are clouds in that infinite space and that He will ride thereon and by that means He will descend. Whereas the truth is that a cloud is but vapor that riseth out of the earth, and it doth not come down from heaven. Rather, the cloud referred to in the Gospel is the human body, so called because the body is as a veil to man, which, even as a cloud, preventeth him from beholding the Sun of Truth that shineth from the horizon of Christ.

I beg of God to open before thine eyes the gates of discoveries and perceptions, that thou mayest become informed of His mysteries in this most manifest of days.

I am most eager to meet thee, but the times are not propitious. God willing, we shall let thee know of a better time, when thou canst come rejoicing.

Summary:

The letter emphasizes the spiritual essence of Christ, contrasting it with the physical body. It explains that those seeking Christ in the physical body are misguided, and the true search should be for His spirit. The heaven Christ rose to is portrayed as the Kingdom of God, transcending physical dimensions. The misunderstanding of Christ's ascent is clarified, emphasizing the

symbolic nature of clouds in the Gospel. The letter concludes with the hope of meeting the recipient in more propitious times.

Key Points:

1. Spiritual Essence of Christ:

- The body is composed of physical elements and will decompose, but the spirit is an incorporeal, everlasting essence of God.
- Seeking Christ in the physical body is futile; one should yearn to find Him in the spirit to grow in joy, love, and closeness to Him.

2. Heavenly Ascent of Christ:

- Christ's ascent to heaven is not in the unending sky but to the Kingdom of His beneficent Lord.
- Christ's statement, "I came down from heaven," and "The Son of Man is in heaven," indicates a heaven beyond directional points.

3. Misunderstanding of Christ's Ascent:

- People have failed to unravel the hidden secrets of the Book, misunderstanding Christ's heavenly ascent.
- The notion of Christ falling from sublimity and riding clouds in infinite space is corrected.

4. Symbolic Nature of Clouds in the Gospel:

- The cloud in the Gospel symbolizes the human body, acting as a veil preventing man from beholding the Sun of Truth.

5. Hope for Spiritual Perceptions:

- The writer implores God to open the recipient's eyes to the gates of discoveries and perceptions, unveiling the mysteries of this manifest day.
- Expresses eagerness to meet the recipient, deferring it to a more propitious time.

Questions and Answers:

1. Q: Why is seeking Christ in His physical body considered futile?

A: Seeking Christ in the physical body is futile because the body is composed of physical elements and will decompose, while the spirit is an everlasting essence of God.

2. Q: What is portrayed as the heaven into which Christ rose?

A: The heaven into which Christ rose is the Kingdom of His beneficent Lord, transcending all directional points.

3. Q: What misconception does the letter correct regarding Christ's ascent?

A: The letter corrects the misconception that Christ fell from sublimity and ascended to a heaven in infinite space, emphasizing the symbolic nature of clouds in the Gospel.

4. Q: What does the cloud symbolize in the Gospel according to the letter?

A: The cloud in the Gospel symbolizes the human body, acting as a veil preventing man from beholding the Sun of Truth.

5. Q: What does the writer express at the end of the letter?

A: The writer expresses eagerness to meet the recipient but defers it to a more propitious time, concluding with hope for the recipient's spiritual perceptions.

– 144 –

O lover of humankind! Thy letter hath been received, and it telleth, God be praised, of thy health and well-being. It appeareth, from thine answer to a previous letter, that feelings of affection were being established between thyself and the friends.

One must see in every human being only that which is worthy of praise. When this is done, one can be a friend to the whole human race. If, however, we look at people from the standpoint of their faults, then being a friend to them is a formidable task.

It happened one day in the time of Christ—may the life of the world be a sacrifice unto Him—that He passed by the dead body of a dog, a carcass reeking, hideous, the limbs rotting away. One of those present said: “How foul its stench!” And another said: “How sickening! How loathsome!” To be brief, each one of them had something to add to the list.

But then Christ Himself spoke, and He told them: “Look at that dog’s teeth! How gleaming white!”

The Messiah’s sin-covering gaze did not for a moment dwell upon the repulsiveness of that carrion. The one element of that dead dog’s carcass which was not abomination was the teeth: and Jesus looked upon their brightness.

Thus is it incumbent upon us, when we direct our gaze toward other people, to see where they excel, not where they fail.

Praise be to God, thy goal is to promote the well-being of humankind and to help the souls to overcome their faults. This good intention will produce laudable results.

Summary:

The letter acknowledges the recipient's well-being and expresses gratitude for their previous response. It emphasizes the importance of seeing the praiseworthy qualities in every human being and becoming a friend to the entire human race through this perspective. A story from the time of

Christ illustrates the idea of focusing on virtues rather than faults. The letter commends the recipient's goal of promoting the well-being of humankind and helping souls overcome their faults.

Key Points:

1. Acknowledgment and Gratitude:

- The letter acknowledges the recipient's health and well-being.
- Expresses gratitude for the recipient's previous response.

2. Seeing the Worthy in Every Human Being:

- One should see in every human being only that which is worthy of praise.
- Being a friend to the whole human race becomes possible when looking at people from the standpoint of their virtues rather than faults.

3. Story from the Time of Christ:

- Christ passed by the dead body of a dog, and people commented on its foul stench and repulsiveness.
- Christ focused on the gleaming white teeth of the dog, highlighting the praiseworthy aspect amidst the repulsiveness.

4. Lesson from the Story:

- The Messiah's gaze focused on the one element of the dog's carcass that was not abomination—the teeth.
- The lesson is to direct our gaze toward where people excel, not where they fail.

5. Encouragement and Commendation:

- Commends the recipient's goal of promoting the well-being of humankind and helping souls overcome faults.
- States that the recipient's good intention will produce laudable results.

Questions and Answers:

1. Q: What does the letter emphasize regarding the perspective on other people?

A: The letter emphasizes the importance of seeing in every human being only that which is worthy of praise and becoming a friend to the entire human race through this perspective.

2. Q: What story does the letter share to illustrate its point?

A: The letter shares a story from the time of Christ about a dead dog's carcass, where people focused on its repulsiveness, but Christ highlighted the gleaming white teeth as a praiseworthy aspect.

3. Q: What is the lesson from the story of the dead dog according to the letter?

A: The lesson is to direct our gaze toward where people excel, focusing on their virtues rather than their faults.

4. Q: What commendation does the letter give to the recipient?

A: The letter commends the recipient's goal of promoting the well-being of humankind and helping souls overcome their faults.

5. Q: What does the letter state about the recipient's good intention?

A: The letter states that the recipient's good intention to promote the well-being of humankind will produce laudable results.

– 145 –

Thou didst write as to the question of spiritual discoveries. The spirit of man is a circumambient power that encompasseth the realities of all things. Whatsoever thou dost see about thee—wondrous products of human workmanship, inventions, discoveries and like evidences—each one of these was once a secret hidden away in the realm of the unknown. The human spirit laid that secret bare, and drew it forth from the unseen into the visible world. There is, for example, the power of steam, and photography and the phonograph, and wireless telegraphy, and advances in mathematics: each and every one of these was once a mystery, a closely guarded secret, yet the human spirit unraveled these secrets and brought them out of the invisible into the light of day. Thus is it clear that the human spirit is an all-encompassing power that exerteth its dominion over the inner essences of all created things, uncovering the well kept mysteries of the phenomenal world.

The divine spirit, however, doth unveil divine realities and universal mysteries that lie within the spiritual world. It is my hope that thou wilt attain unto this divine spirit, so that thou mayest uncover the secrets of the other world, as well as the mysteries of the world below.

Thou didst ask as to chapter 14, verse 30 of the Gospel of John, where the Lord Christ saith, “Hereafter I will not talk much with you: for the Prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in Me.” The Prince of this world is the Blessed Beauty; and “hath nothing in Me” signifieth: after Me all will draw grace from Me, but He is independent of Me, and will draw no grace from Me. That is, He is rich beyond any grace of Mine.

As to thy question regarding discoveries made by the soul after it hath put off its human form: certainly, that world is a world of perceptions and discoveries, for the interposed veil will be lifted away and the human spirit will gaze upon souls that are above, below, and on a par with itself. It is similar to the condition of a human being in the womb, where his eyes are veiled, and all things are hidden away from him. Once he is born out of the uterine world and entereth this life, he findeth it, with relation to that of the womb, to be a place of perceptions and discoveries, and he observeth all things through his outer eye. In the same way, once he hath departed this life, he will behold in that world whatsoever was hidden from him here: but there he will look upon and comprehend all things with his inner eye. There will he gaze on his fellows and his peers, and those in the ranks above him, and those below. As for what is meant by the equality of souls in the all-highest realm, it is this: the souls of the believers, at the time when they first become manifest in the world of the body, are equal, and each is sanctified and pure. In this world, however, they will begin to differ one from another, some achieving the highest station, some a middle one, others remaining at the lowest stage of being. Their equal status is at the beginning of their existence; the differentiation followeth their passing away.

Thou didst write as to Seir. Seir is a locality near Nazareth in Galilee.

As to the statement of Job, chapter 19, verses 25–27, “I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that He shall stand at the latter day upon the earth,” the meaning here is: I shall not be abased, I have a Sustainer and a Guardian, and my Helper, my Defender will in the end be made manifest. And although now my flesh be weak and clothed with worms, yet shall I be healed, and with these mine own eyes, that is, mine inner sight, I shall behold Him. This did Job say after they had reproached

him, and he himself had lamented the harms that his tribulations had wreaked upon him. And even when, from the terrible inroads of the sickness, his body was covered with worms, he sought to tell those about him that still he would be fully healed, and that in his very body, with his very eyes, he would gaze on his Redeemer.

As to the woman in the Revelation of Saint John, chapter 12, who fled into the wilderness, and the great wonder appearing in the heavens—that woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet: what is meant by the woman is the Law of God. For according to the terminology of the Holy Books, this reference is to the Law, the woman being its symbol here. And the two luminaries, the sun and the moon, are the two thrones, the Turkish and the Persian, these two being under the rule of the Law of God. The sun is the symbol of the Persian Empire, and the moon, that is, the crescent, of the Turkish. The twelve-fold crown is the twelve Imáms, who, even as the Apostles, supported the Faith of God. The newborn Child is the Beauty of the Adored One,¹ come forth out of the Law of God. He then saith that the woman fled into the wilderness, that is, the Law of God was carried out of Palestine to the desert of Hġjáz, where it remained 1260 years—that is, until the advent of the promised Child. And as is well known, in the Holy Books, every day is accounted as one year.

Summary:

The letter discusses the power of the human spirit to uncover mysteries in the physical world and the divine spirit's ability to unveil spiritual realities. It interprets a verse from the Gospel of John about the Prince of this world and explains the concept of equality of souls and differentiation in the afterlife. The significance of Seir, the location near Nazareth, is clarified. The interpretation of

Job's statement and the woman in the Revelation of Saint John is provided, connecting them to the Law of God and historical events.

Key Points:

1. Human and Divine Spirit:

- The human spirit has the power to uncover mysteries in the physical world.
- The divine spirit unveils spiritual realities and universal mysteries in the spiritual world.

2. Interpretation of Gospel of John Verse:

- The Prince of this world is the Blessed Beauty, independent and rich beyond any grace.
- "Hath nothing in Me" signifies that the Prince draws no grace from Christ but provides grace to all.

3. Discoveries After Death:

- After departing the human form, the soul perceives and discovers in the spiritual world.
- Souls in the afterlife gaze upon others with their inner eye, and equality at the beginning transforms into differentiation.

4. Clarification of Seir:

- Seir is a locality near Nazareth in Galilee.

5. Interpretation of Job's Statement and Revelation of Saint John:

- Job's statement expresses confidence in redemption and healing, even in the face of tribulations.
- The woman in the Revelation of Saint John represents the Law of God, with the luminaries symbolizing the Turkish and Persian Empires, and the Child representing the Beauty of the Adored One.

Questions and Answers:

1. Q: What power does the human spirit possess, according to the letter?

A: The human spirit has the power to uncover mysteries in the physical world, revealing inventions and discoveries.

2. Q: Who is the Prince of this world mentioned in the Gospel of John verse, and what does "hath nothing in Me" signify?

A: The Prince of this world is the Blessed Beauty. "Hath nothing in Me" signifies that the Prince draws no grace from Christ but provides grace to all.

3. Q: How does the letter explain discoveries made by the soul after putting off its human form?

A: After departing the human form, the soul perceives and discovers in the spiritual world, gazing upon others with its inner eye.

4. Q: What is the significance of Seir in the letter?

A: Seir is a locality near Nazareth in Galilee.

5. Q: What does the woman in the Revelation of Saint John represent, and how is it connected to historical events?

A: The woman represents the Law of God, and the luminaries symbolize the Turkish and Persian Empires. Historical events are connected to the relocation of the Law to the desert of Hĭjáz for 1260 years until the advent of the promised Child.

– 146 –

O thou handmaid afire with the love of God! I have considered thine excellent letter, and thanked God for thy safe arrival in that great city. I beg of Him, through His unfailing aid, to cause this return of thine to exert a powerful effect. Such a thing can only come about if thou dost divest thyself of all attachment to this world, and dost put on the vesture of holiness; if thou dost limit all thy thoughts and all thy words to the remembrance of God and His praise; to spreading His sweet savors abroad, and performing righteous acts; and if thou dost devote thyself to awakening the heedless and restoring sight to the blind, hearing to the deaf, speech to the mute, and through the power of the spirit, giving life to the dead.

For even as Christ said of them in the Gospel, the people are blind, they are deaf, they are dumb; and He said: “I will heal them.”

Be thou kind and compassionate to thine enfeebled mother, and speak to her of the Kingdom, that her heart may rejoice.

Give thou my greetings to Miss Ford. Convey to her the glad tidings that these are the days of the Kingdom of God. Say unto her: Blessed art thou for thy noble aims, blessed art thou for thy goodly deeds, blessed art thou for thy spiritual nature. Verily do I love thee on account of these thine aims and qualities and deeds. Tell her further: Remember the Messiah, and His days on earth, and His abasement, and His tribulations, and how the people paid Him no mind. Remember how the Jews would hold Him up to ridicule, and mock at Him, and address Him with: “Peace be upon thee, King of the Jews! Peace be upon thee, King of Kings!” How they would say that He was mad, and would ask how the Cause of that crucified One could ever spread out to the easts of the world and the wests thereof. None followed Him then, save only a few souls who were fishermen, carpenters, and other plain folk. Alas, alas, for such delusions!

And see what happened then: how their mighty banners were reversed, and in their place His most exalted standard lifted up; how all the bright stars in that heaven of honor and pride did set; how they sank in the west of all that vanisheth—while His brilliant Orb still shineth down out of skies of undying glory, as the centuries and the ages roll by. Be ye then admonished, ye that have eyes to see! Erelong shall ye behold even greater things than this.

Know thou that all the powers combined have not the power to establish universal peace, nor to withstand the overmastering dominion, at every time and season, of these endless wars. Erelong, however, shall the power of heaven, the dominion of the Holy Spirit, hoist on the high summits the banners of love and peace, and there above the castles of majesty and might shall those banners wave in the rushing winds that blow out of the tender mercy of God.

Convey thou my greetings to Mrs. Florence, and tell her: The diverse congregations have given up the ground of their belief, and adopted doctrines that are of no account in the sight of God. They are even as the Pharisees who both prayed and fasted, and then did sentence Jesus Christ to death. By the life of God! This thing is passing strange!

As to thee, O handmaid of God, softly recite thou this commune to thy Lord, and say unto Him:

O God, my God! Fill up for me the cup of detachment from all things, and in the assembly of Thy splendors and bestowals, rejoice me with the wine of loving Thee. Free me from the assaults of passion and desire, break off from me the shackles of this nether world, draw me

with rapture unto Thy supernal realm, and refresh me amongst the handmaids with the breathings of Thy holiness.

O Lord, brighten Thou my face with the lights of Thy bestowals, light Thou mine eyes with beholding the signs of Thine all-subduing might; delight my heart with the glory of Thy knowledge that encompasseth all things, gladden Thou my soul with Thy soul-reviving tidings of great joy, O Thou King of this world and the Kingdom above, O Thou Lord of dominion and might, that I may spread abroad Thy signs and tokens, and proclaim Thy Cause, and promote Thy Teachings, and serve Thy Law, and exalt Thy Word.

Thou art verily the Powerful, the Ever-Giving, the Able, the Omnipotent.

As to the fundamentals of teaching the Faith: know thou that delivering the Message can be accomplished only through goodly deeds and spiritual attributes, an utterance that is crystal clear and the happiness reflected from the face of that one who is expounding the Teachings. It is essential that the deeds of the teacher should attest the truth of his words. Such is the state of whoso doth spread abroad the sweet savors of God and the quality of him who is sincere in his faith.

Once the Lord hath enabled thee to attain this condition, be thou assured that He will inspire thee with words of truth, and will cause thee to speak through the breathings of the Holy Spirit.

Summary:

The letter encourages the recipient, a dedicated handmaid of God, to detach from worldly concerns and focus on spreading love, peace, and the teachings of God. Greetings are conveyed to individuals like Miss Ford and Mrs. Florence, with messages highlighting the days of the Kingdom and the power of heaven to establish peace. The letter draws parallels with the early days of Christ's ministry and encourages the handmaid to pray for detachment and divine assistance. The

fundamentals of teaching the Faith are emphasized, emphasizing the importance of good deeds and sincere faith.

Key Points:

1. Encouragement for the Handmaid:

- The recipient is encouraged to divest herself of attachment to the world and don the vesture of holiness.
- The focus should be on remembrance of God, righteous acts, and awakening others spiritually.

2. Greetings to Miss Ford and Mrs. Florence:

- Miss Ford is praised for noble aims, good deeds, and spiritual nature.
- Mrs. Florence is urged to remember the Messiah's days and the reversal of mighty banners.

3. Divine Dominion and Universal Peace:

- Human powers are incapable of establishing universal peace.
- The power of heaven, the dominion of the Holy Spirit, will hoist banners of love and peace.

4. Message to Mrs. Florence:

- Various congregations have adopted doctrines of no account, akin to the Pharisees' actions against Jesus Christ.

5. Prayer for Detachment and Divine Assistance:

- The recipient is guided to pray for detachment, spiritual joy, and divine assistance.
- The fundamentals of teaching the Faith include good deeds, clear utterance, and sincerity in faith.

Questions and Answers:

1. Q: What is the recipient encouraged to focus on in spreading love and peace?

A: The recipient is encouraged to divest from worldly concerns, remember God, and spread love and peace through good deeds.

2. Q: What parallel is drawn with the early days of Christ's ministry?

A: Similar to the early followers of Christ, the recipient is encouraged to endure in the face of challenges and mockery.

3. Q: What is conveyed about the power of heaven to establish peace?

A: The letter expresses that the power of heaven will eventually establish peace, lifting banners of love and peace.

4. Q: What message is conveyed to Mrs. Florence regarding congregations?

A: Various congregations have abandoned their beliefs and adopted doctrines of no account, similar to the Pharisees' actions against Jesus Christ.

5. Q: What are the fundamentals of teaching the Faith mentioned in the letter?

A: Teaching the Faith involves good deeds, clear utterance, and sincere faith, with the assurance that divine assistance will follow.

Reflect upon the past events of the time of Christ, and the present events shall become clear and manifest.

Summary:

The directive urges reflection on past events during the time of Christ, suggesting that doing so will bring clarity and understanding to current events.

Key Points:

1. Temporal Reflection:

- The statement calls for contemplation on historical events, specifically those during the time of Christ.

2. Understanding Present Events:

- The implication is that by reflecting on past events, one gains insight into and comprehension of present occurrences.

Questions and Answers:

1. Q: What is the focus of the directive?

A: The directive emphasizes reflecting on past events during the time of Christ.

2. Q: What is suggested to be the outcome of reflecting on past events?

A: It is implied that reflecting on past events will bring clarity and understanding to present events.

O ye sons and daughters of the Kingdom! Thankful, the birds of the spirit seek only to fly in the high heavens and to sing out their songs with wondrous art. But the pitiable earthworms love only to tunnel into the ground, and what a mighty struggle they make to get themselves down into its depths! Even so are the sons of earth. Their highest aim is to augment their means of continuing on, in this vanishing world, this death in life; and this despite the fact that they are bound hand and foot by a thousand cares and sorrows, and never safe from danger, not even for the twinkling of an eye; never at any time secure, even from sudden death. Wherefore, after a brief span, are they utterly effaced, and no sign remaineth to tell of them, and no word of them is ever heard again.

Then let you engage in the praise of Bahá'u'lláh, for it is through His grace and succor that ye have become sons and daughters of the Kingdom; it is thanks to Him that ye are now songsters in the meadows of truth, and have soared upward to the heights of the glory that abideth forever. Ye have found your place in the world that dieth not; the breaths of the Holy Spirit have blown upon you; ye have taken on another life, ye have gained access to the Threshold of God.

Wherefore, with great gladness, establish ye spiritual assemblies, and engage ye in uttering the praise and glorification of the Lord, and calling Him Holy and Most Great. Lift up to the realm of the All-Glorious your suppliant cries for help, and voice ye at every moment a myriad thanks for having won this abounding favor and exceeding grace.

Summary:

The passage contrasts the limited and earthly pursuits of those focused on material existence with the elevated and spiritual endeavors of the followers of Bahá'u'lláh. It encourages praising

Bahá'u'lláh and establishing spiritual assemblies with gratitude for the transformative grace experienced.

Key Points:

1. Earthly Pursuits:

- Describes people as akin to earthworms, engrossed in the struggles of material life.
- Highlights the transitory nature of earthly concerns and the inevitability of death.

2. Spiritual Transformation:

- Emphasizes the contrast for the followers of Bahá'u'lláh, who become sons and daughters of the Kingdom.
- Encourages engagement in the praise of Bahá'u'lláh and soaring to spiritual heights.

3. Gratitude and Gladness:

- Calls for the establishment of spiritual assemblies.
- Emphasizes the importance of expressing gratitude for the bestowed favor and grace.

Questions and Answers:

1. Q: What is the metaphor used to describe people engrossed in material pursuits?

A: People are likened to earthworms tunneling into the ground.

2. Q: What contrast does the passage highlight?

A: It contrasts earthly pursuits with the elevated and spiritual endeavors of Bahá'u'lláh's followers.

3. Q: What is the encouragement given to the followers of Bahá'u'lláh?

A: Followers are encouraged to engage in praising Bahá'u'lláh, establish spiritual assemblies, and express gratitude.

4. Q: What is the fate of those focused solely on earthly pursuits?

A: They are described as being utterly effaced, with no sign remaining, and their memory fading away.

5. Q: What transformative experience is attributed to the followers of Bahá'u'lláh?

A: They are said to have gained access to the Threshold of God and taken on another life.

– 149 –

O thou who hast eyes to see! That which thou didst witness is the very truth, and it pertaineth to the realm of vision.

The perfume is intimately commingled and blended with the bud, and once the bud hath opened the sweet scent of it is spread abroad. The herb is not without its fruit, although it seemeth so, for in this garden of God every plant exerteth its own influence and hath its own properties, and every plant can even match the laughing, hundred-petalled rose in rejoicing the sense with its fragrance. Be thou assured of this. Although the pages of a book know nothing of the words and the meanings traced upon them, even so, because of their connection with these words, friends pass them reverently from hand to hand. This connection, furthermore, is purest bounty.

When the human soul soareth out of this transient heap of dust and riseth into the world of God, then veils will fall away, and verities will come to light, and all things unknown before will be made clear, and hidden truths be understood.

Consider how a being, in the world of the womb, was deaf of ear and blind of eye, and mute of tongue; how he was bereft of any perceptions at all. But once, out of that world of darkness, he passed into this world of light, then his eye saw, his ear heard, his tongue spoke. In the same way, once he hath hastened away from this mortal place into the Kingdom of God, then he will be born in the spirit; then the eye of his perception will open, the ear of his soul will hearken, and all the truths of which he was ignorant before will be made plain and clear.

An observant traveler passing along a way will certainly recall his discoveries to mind, unless some accident befall him and efface the memory.

Summary:

The passage metaphorically describes the soul's journey from the material world to the spiritual realm. It asserts that the spiritual world holds hidden truths, and upon departing from the physical realm, the soul gains a higher perception, understanding, and clarity.

Key Points:**1. Metaphor of Perfume and Bud:**

- Describes the intimate connection between the perfume and the bud.
- Suggests that every plant in God's garden has its own properties and influences.

2. Analogy of the Pages of a Book:

- Compares the relationship between the pages of a book and the words on them.
- Highlights the reverential passing of knowledge and insights among friends.

3. Transformation of the Soul:

- Portrays the limitations of the soul in the material world (deaf, blind, mute).
- Illustrates that upon transitioning to the spiritual realm, the soul gains perception, hearing, and speech.

4. Revelation of Hidden Truths:

- Asserts that veils will fall away in the spiritual realm.
- Promises that hidden truths will become clear, and unknown things will be understood.

5. Analogy of the Observant Traveler:

- Likens the soul's journey to that of an observant traveler on a path.
- Suggests that unless some accident occurs, the traveler recalls his discoveries.

Questions and Answers:

1. Q: What is the metaphor used to describe the relationship between perfume and bud?

A: The perfume is described as intimately commingled and blended with the bud.

2. Q: What analogy is drawn between the pages of a book and the words on them?

A: The passage compares the connection between the pages of a book and the words written on them to the sharing of knowledge among friends.

3. Q: How is the soul depicted in the material world?

A: In the material world, the soul is described as deaf, blind, mute, and lacking perceptions.

4. Q: What changes occur to the soul upon transitioning to the spiritual realm?

A: The soul gains perception, hearing, and speech, and hidden truths become clear.

5. Q: What does the passage suggest about the observant traveler?

A: The observant traveler recalls his discoveries unless some accident befalls him and effaces the memory.

O thou handmaid aflame with the fire of God's love! Grieve thou not over the troubles and hardships of this nether world, nor be thou glad in times of ease and comfort, for both shall pass away. This present life is even as a swelling wave, or a mirage, or drifting shadows. Could ever a distorted image on the desert serve as refreshing waters? No, by the Lord of Lords! Never can reality and the mere semblance of reality be one, and wide is the difference between fancy and fact, between truth and the phantom thereof.

Know thou that the Kingdom is the real world, and this nether place is only its shadow stretching out. A shadow hath no life of its own; its existence is only a fantasy, and nothing more; it is but images reflected in water, and seeming as pictures to the eye.

Rely upon God. Trust in Him. Praise Him, and call Him continually to mind. He verily turneth trouble into ease, and sorrow into solace, and toil into utter peace. He verily hath dominion over all things.

If thou wouldst hearken to my words, release thyself from the fetters of whatsoever cometh to pass. Nay rather, under all conditions thank thou thy loving Lord, and yield up thine affairs unto His Will that worketh as He pleaseth. This verily is better for thee than all else, in either world.

Summary:

The passage advises against being overly distressed during hardships or overly joyous during times of ease. It emphasizes the transient nature of this world and likens it to a mirage or drifting shadows. The real world is the Kingdom of God, and reliance on, trust in, and continual

remembrance of God can transform trouble into ease. Surrendering to God's will and expressing gratitude under all conditions are encouraged as better than any worldly circumstance.

Key Points:

1. Nature of This World:

- Describes the troubles and hardships of the material world as passing away.
- Compares this life to a swelling wave, a mirage, or drifting shadows.
- Emphasizes the impermanence of worldly circumstances.

2. Kingdom as the Real World:

- States that the Kingdom of God is the true and lasting reality.
- Depicts the material world as the shadow of the Kingdom.
- Highlights the difference between reality and the semblance of reality.

3. Shadow's Lack of Life:

- Illustrates that a shadow has no life of its own.
- Likens the existence of the material world to images reflected in water.

4. Reliance on God:

- Encourages reliance on God, trust in Him, and continual remembrance.
- Asserts that God can transform trouble into ease and sorrow into solace.
- Emphasizes God's dominion over all things.

5. Surrendering to God's Will:

- Advises releasing oneself from the fetters of worldly circumstances.
- Recommends yielding one's affairs to God's will.
- States that surrendering to God's will and expressing gratitude is better than any worldly condition.

Questions and Answers:

1. Q: How is the nature of this world described in the passage?

A: The world is described as having passing troubles and hardships, comparable to a mirage, drifting shadows, and a swelling wave.

2. Q: What is emphasized as the real and lasting reality?

A: The Kingdom of God is highlighted as the true and lasting reality.

3. Q: How is the existence of the material world likened to a shadow?

A: The material world is likened to a shadow with no life of its own, existing as images reflected in water.

4. Q: What is encouraged in facing troubles and hardships?

A: Reliance on God, trust in Him, and continual remembrance are encouraged.

5. Q: What is recommended as better than any worldly circumstance?

A: Surrendering to God's will, releasing oneself from worldly concerns, and expressing gratitude are recommended as better than any worldly condition.

– 151 –

O thou believer in the oneness of God! Know thou that nothing profiteth a soul save the love of the All-Merciful, nothing lighteth up a heart save the splendor that shineth from the realm of the Lord.

Forsake thou every other concern, let oblivion overtake the memory of all else. Confine thy thoughts to whatever will lift up the human soul to the Paradise of heavenly grace, and make every bird of the Kingdom wing its way unto the Supreme Horizon, the central point of everlasting honor in this contingent world.

Summary:

The passage emphasizes the central importance of the love of God in benefiting the soul and illuminating the heart. It advises believers to focus solely on this love, letting go of all other concerns and redirecting thoughts towards elevating the human soul to the heavenly realms.

Key Points:**1. Essence of Spiritual Profit:**

- Stresses that nothing benefits the soul except the love of the All-Merciful.
- Highlights the illuminating effect of God's love on the heart.

2. Exclusivity of Divine Love:

- Encourages believers to forsake all other concerns.
- Calls for the oblivion of memories unrelated to the love of God.

3. Single-Minded Focus:

- Advises confining thoughts solely to what elevates the human soul.
- Encourages a concentration on reaching the Paradise of heavenly grace.

4. Universal Aspiration:

- Urges believers to make every being, represented by "every bird of the Kingdom," strive towards the Supreme Horizon.
- Identifies the Supreme Horizon as the central point of everlasting honor.

5. Temporal World Perspective:

- Describes the world as "this contingent world," implying its temporary nature.
- Positions the Supreme Horizon as the focal point even in the transient nature of the current existence.

Questions and Answers:

1. Q: According to the passage, what is the ultimate source of benefit for the soul?

A: The love of the All-Merciful is emphasized as the ultimate source of benefit for the soul.

2. Q: What is believers advised to forsake and forget?

A: Believers are advised to forsake every other concern and let the memory of all else be overtaken by oblivion.

3. Q: What is the recommended focus of believers' thoughts?

A: Believers are encouraged to confine their thoughts to whatever elevates the human soul to the Paradise of heavenly grace.

4. Q: How is the aspiration for divine love portrayed in a universal sense?

A: Believers are urged to make every bird of the Kingdom wing its way to the Supreme Horizon, signifying a universal aspiration.

5. Q: How is the temporal nature of the world described in the passage?

A: The world is referred to as "this contingent world," suggesting its temporary and transient nature.

– 152 –

As to the question regarding the soul of a murderer, and what his punishment would be, the answer given was that the murderer must expiate his crime: that is, if they put the murderer to death, his death is his atonement for his crime, and following the death, God in His justice will impose no second penalty upon him, for divine justice would not allow this.

Summary:

The passage addresses the question of the soul of a murderer and its punishment. The response explains that if a murderer is put to death, that death serves as atonement for the crime. Divine

justice is emphasized, stating that God would not impose a second penalty following the death of the murderer.

Key Points:

1. Question on Murderer's Soul:

- Addresses the inquiry about the fate of a murderer's soul and the subsequent punishment.

2. Expiation for Murder:

- States that the murderer must expiate the crime.
- Specifies that if the murderer is executed, the death itself serves as atonement.

3. Divine Justice:

- Emphasizes the principle of divine justice.
- Asserts that God, in His justice, would not impose a second penalty after the murderer's death.

Questions and Answers:

1. Q: What is the response to the question about the murderer's soul?

A: The response explains that the murderer must expiate the crime.

2. Q: How is atonement achieved for the murderer?

A: The atonement for the murderer is achieved through their death, especially if they are put to death.

3. Q: What principle is emphasized in the context of divine justice?

A: The passage emphasizes the principle of divine justice.

4. Q: What does the response say about God's imposition of penalties?

A: It asserts that, in His justice, God would not impose a second penalty following the death of the murderer.

5. Q: What is the role of the murderer's death in the context of divine justice?

A: The death of the murderer serves as atonement for the crime, aligning with divine justice and preventing additional penalties.

– 153 –

O thou handmaid of God! In this day, to thank God for His bounties consisteth in possessing a radiant heart, and a soul open to the promptings of the spirit. This is the essence of thanksgiving.

As for offering thanks by speaking out or writing, although this is indeed acceptable, yet when compared with that other thanksgiving, it is only a semblance and unreal; for the essential thing is these intimations of the spirit, these emanations from the deep recess of the heart. It is my hope that thou wilt be favored therewith.

Regarding one's lack of capacity and one's undeserving on the Day of Resurrection, this does not cause one to be shut out from gifts and bounties; for this is not the Day of Justice but the Day of Grace, while justice is allotting to each whatever is his due. Then look thou not at the degree of thy capacity, look thou at the boundless favor of Bahá'u'lláh; all-encompassing is His bounty, and consummate His grace.

I ask of God that with His assistance and strong support thou mayest teach the inner meanings of the Torah with eloquence, understanding, vigor and skill. Turn thy face toward the Kingdom of God, ask for the bestowals of the Holy Spirit, speak, and the confirmations of the Spirit will come.

As for that mighty solar orb which thou didst behold in thy dream, that was the Promised One, and its spreading rays were His bounties, and the translucent surface of the mass of water signifieth hearts that are undefiled and pure, while the surging waves denote the great excitement of those hearts and the fact that they were shaken and deeply moved, that is, the waves are the stirrings of the spirit and holy intimations of the soul. Praise thou God that in the world of the dream thou hast witnessed such disclosures.

With reference to what is meant by an individual becoming entirely forgetful of self: the intent is that he should rise up and sacrifice himself in the true sense, that is, he should obliterate the promptings of the human condition, and rid himself of such characteristics as are worthy of blame and constitute the gloomy darkness of this life on earth—not that he should allow his physical health to deteriorate and his body to become infirm.

I do earnestly and humbly supplicate at the Holy Threshold that heavenly blessings and divine forgiveness will encompass thy dear mother, as well as thy loving sisters and relatives. Especially do I pray on behalf of thy betrothed, who hath suddenly hastened away from this world into the next.

Summary:

The passage emphasizes the essence of thanksgiving as having a radiant heart and a soul open to spiritual promptings. It discusses the Day of Resurrection, highlighting the boundless favor of Bahá'u'lláh, and encourages teaching the inner meanings of the Torah with eloquence. The dream interpretation involves the Promised One and symbolizes pure hearts moved by spiritual stirrings. Additionally, becoming forgetful of self is explained as sacrificing negative human characteristics

without neglecting physical health. The closing prayer is for heavenly blessings and forgiveness for the recipient's family, including a betrothed individual who has passed away.

Key Points:

1. Essence of Thanksgiving:

- True thanksgiving is possessing a radiant heart and a soul open to spiritual promptings.
- Speaking or writing words of thanks is acceptable but secondary to heartfelt expressions.

2. Day of Resurrection and Divine Favor:

- On the Day of Resurrection, it is the Day of Grace, not Justice.
- Lack of capacity and undeserving do not hinder receiving gifts and bounties from Bahá'u'lláh.

3. Teaching the Inner Meanings of the Torah:

- Encouragement to teach the inner meanings of the Torah with eloquence, understanding, vigor, and seeking the assistance of the Holy Spirit.

4. Dream Interpretation:

- The mighty solar orb in the dream symbolizes the Promised One.
- Spreading rays represent His bounties, and the translucent water surface signifies undefiled and pure hearts.
- Surging waves denote the stirrings of the spirit and holy intimations of the soul.

5. Becoming Forgetful of Self:

- Involves rising up and sacrificing negative human characteristics.
- Physical health should not deteriorate; it is about eliminating undesirable traits.

6. Closing Prayer:

- A prayer for heavenly blessings and divine forgiveness for the recipient's family, especially the betrothed individual who passed away.

Questions and Answers:

1. Q: What is the essence of true thanksgiving according to the passage?

A: True thanksgiving is having a radiant heart and a soul open to spiritual promptings.

2. Q: How does the passage characterize the Day of Resurrection?

A: It is described as the Day of Grace, not Justice, where divine favor is boundless despite one's lack of capacity.

3. Q: What encouragement is given regarding teaching the Torah's inner meanings?

A: The passage encourages teaching with eloquence, understanding, vigor, and seeking the assistance of the Holy Spirit.

4. Q: What does the dream interpretation involve?

A: The dream involves a mighty solar orb symbolizing the Promised One, spreading rays as His bounties, and water surfaces representing pure hearts and spiritual stirrings.

5. Q: What does "becoming forgetful of self" mean in the context of the passage?

A: It entails sacrificing negative human characteristics without neglecting physical health.

6. Q: Who is the closing prayer for, and what does it encompass?

A: The closing prayer is for the recipient's family, especially the betrothed individual who passed away, seeking heavenly blessings and divine forgiveness.

– 154 –

O thou son of the Kingdom! Thy most agreeable letters, with their pleasing style, ever gladden our hearts. When the song is of the Kingdom, it rejoiceth the soul.

Praise thou God that thou hast travelled to that country¹ for the purpose of raising up His Word and spreading abroad the holy fragrance of His Kingdom, and that thou art serving as a gardener in the gardens of heaven. Erelong shall thine efforts be crowned with success.

O thou son of the Kingdom! All things are beneficial if joined with the love of God; and without His love all things are harmful, and act as a veil between man and the Lord of the Kingdom. When His love is there, every bitterness turneth sweet, and every bounty rendereth a wholesome pleasure. For example, a melody, sweet to the ear, bringeth the very spirit of life to a heart in love with God, yet staineth with lust a soul engrossed in sensual desires. And every branch of learning, conjoined with the love of God, is approved and worthy of praise; but bereft of His love, learning is barren—indeed, it bringeth on madness. Every kind of knowledge, every science, is as a tree: if the fruit of it be the love of God, then is it a blessed tree, but if not, that tree is but dried-up wood, and shall only feed the fire.

O thou loyal servant of God and thou spiritual healer of man! Whensoever thou dost attend a patient, turn thy face toward the Lord of the heavenly Kingdom, ask the Holy Spirit to come to thine aid, then heal thou the sickness.

– 155 –

O thou flame of God's love! What thou hast written hath brought great joy, for thy letter was as a garden from which roses of inner meanings spread abroad the sweet exhalations of the love of God. In the same way, my answers will serve as rainshowers and dew, to bestow on those spiritual plants that have blossomed in the garden of thy heart more freshness and delicate beauty than words can tell.

Thou didst write of afflictive tests that have assailed thee. To the loyal soul, a test is but God's grace and favor; for the valiant doth joyously press forward to furious battle on the field of anguish, when the coward, whimpering with fright, will tremble and shake. So too, the proficient student, who hath with great competence mastered his subjects and committed them to memory, will happily exhibit his skills before his examiners on the day of his tests. So too will solid gold wondrously gleam and shine out in the assayer's fire.

It is clear, then, that tests and trials are, for sanctified souls, but God's bounty and grace, while to the weak, they are a calamity, unexpected and sudden.

These tests, even as thou didst write, do but cleanse the spotting of self from off the mirror of the heart, till the Sun of Truth can cast its rays thereon; for there is no veil more obstructive than the self, and however tenuous that veil may be, at the last it will completely shut a person out, and deprive him of his portion of eternal grace.

O thou enraptured handmaid of the Lord! When the believers, men and women, pass in thought before my eyes, I feel myself warmed at the fire of God's love, and I pray that the Almighty will succor those holy souls with His invisible hosts. Praised be the Lord that the prophecies of all His Manifestations have now been clearly fulfilled, in this greatest of all days, this holy and blessed age.

O thou enraptured handmaid of God! Nearness is verily of the soul, not of the body; and the help that is sought, and the help that cometh, is not material but of the spirit; nevertheless it is my hope that thou wilt attain to nearness in every sense. The bounties of God will verily encompass a sanctified soul even as the sun's light doth the moon and stars: be thou assured of this.

Waft thou to each one of the believers, men and women alike, fragrant breaths of holiness on behalf of 'Abdu'l-Bahá. Inspire them all and urge them on to shed abroad the sweet savors of the Lord.

Summary:

The passage appreciates the uplifting letters and praises the efforts made to spread the Word of God. It emphasizes that all actions are beneficial when accompanied by the love of God and warns against the harmful effects of actions without His love. The analogy of a melody sweet to the ear highlights the transformative power of God's love. Knowledge and sciences are deemed fruitful

when rooted in the love of God. The closing part advises a servant of God and spiritual healer to turn to the Lord when attending to patients.

Key Points:

1. Appreciation of Efforts:

- Gratitude for the pleasing letters and efforts made to spread the Word of God.
- Serving as a gardener in the gardens of heaven with the expectation of success.

2. Beneficial Actions with God's Love:

- All actions are beneficial when joined with the love of God.
- Without His love, actions can be harmful and act as a veil between individuals and God.

3. Transformative Power of God's Love:

- God's love transforms bitterness into sweetness and renders every bounty a wholesome pleasure.
- The analogy of a melody sweet to the ear bringing life to a heart in love with God.

4. Fruitfulness of Knowledge and Sciences:

- Knowledge and sciences are likened to a tree; if rooted in the love of God, they are blessed.
- Without God's love, knowledge is barren and can lead to madness.

5. Guidance for Healing and Serving:

- Guidance for a servant of God and spiritual healer to turn to the Lord and seek the Holy Spirit's aid when attending to patients.
- Implicitly underscores the spiritual dimension in the healing process.

Questions and Answers:

1. Q: What is emphasized about actions in the passage?

A: Actions are beneficial when accompanied by the love of God, while those without His love can be harmful.

2. Q: How is the transformative power of God's love illustrated in the passage?

A: God's love transforms bitterness into sweetness and turns every bounty into a wholesome pleasure, akin to a melody sweet to the ear.

3. Q: How are knowledge and sciences described in relation to God's love?

A: Knowledge and sciences are likened to a tree; when rooted in the love of God, they are blessed, but without His love, they are barren.

4. Q: What analogy is used to convey the impact of God's love on the heart?

A: The analogy of a melody sweet to the ear bringing life to a heart in love with God.

5. Q: What guidance is provided for a spiritual healer attending to patients?

A: The passage advises the healer to turn to the Lord, seek the Holy Spirit's aid, and heal with God's love.

O thou servant of the Holy Threshold! We have read what flowed out from thy pen in thy love for God, and found the contents of thy letter most pleasing. My hope is that through the bounty of God, the breaths of the All-Merciful will at all times refresh and renew thee.

Thou didst write of reincarnation. A belief in reincarnation goeth far back into the ancient history of almost all peoples, and was held even by the philosophers of Greece, the Roman sages, the ancient Egyptians, and the great Assyrians. Nevertheless such superstitions and sayings are but absurdities in the sight of God.

The major argument of the reincarnationists was this, that according to the justice of God, each must receive his due: whenever a man is afflicted with some calamity, for example, this is because of some wrong he hath committed. But take a child that is still in its mother's womb, the embryo but newly formed, and that child is blind, deaf, lame, defective—what sin hath such a child committed, to deserve its afflictions? They answer that, although to outward seeming the child, still in the womb, is guilty of no sin—nevertheless he perpetrated some wrong when in his previous form, and thus he came to deserve his punishment.

These individuals, however, have overlooked the following point. If creation went forward according to only one rule, how could the all-encompassing Power make Itself felt? How could the Almighty be the One Who “doeth as He pleaseth and ordaineth as He willeth”?¹

Briefly, a return is indeed referred to in the Holy Scriptures, but by this is meant the return of the qualities, conditions, effects, perfections, and inner realities of the lights which recur in every dispensation. The reference is not to specific, individual souls and identities.

It may be said, for instance, that this lamplight is last night's come back again, or that last year's rose hath returned to the garden this year. Here the reference is not to the individual reality, the fixed identity, the specialized being of that other rose, rather doth it mean that the qualities, the distinctive characteristics of that other light, that other flower, are present now, in these. Those perfections, that is, those graces and gifts of a former springtime are back again this year. We say, for example, that this fruit is the same as last year's; but we are thinking only of the delicacy, bloom and freshness, and the sweet taste of it; for it is obvious that that impregnable center of reality, that specific identity, can never return.

What peace, what ease and comfort did the Holy Ones of God ever discover during Their sojourn in this nether world, that They should continually seek to come back and live this life again? Doth not a single turn at this anguish, these afflictions, these calamities, these body blows, these dire straits, suffice, that They should wish for repeated visits to the life of this world? This cup was not so sweet that one would care to drink of it a second time.

Therefore do the lovers of the Abhá Beauty wish for no other recompense but to reach that station where they may gaze upon Him in the Realm of Glory, and they walk no other path save over desert sands of longing for those exalted heights. They seek that ease and solace which will abide forever, and those bestowals that are sanctified beyond the understanding of the worldly mind.

When thou lookest about thee with a perceptive eye, thou wilt note that on this dusty earth all humankind are suffering. Here no man is at rest as a reward for what he hath performed in former lives; nor is there anyone so blissful as seemingly to pluck the fruit of bygone anguish. And if a human life, with its spiritual being, were limited to this earthly span, then what would be the harvest of creation? Indeed, what would be the effects and the outcomes of Divinity Itself? Were such a notion true, then all created things, all contingent realities, and this whole world of being—all would be meaningless. God forbid that one should hold to such a fiction and gross error.

For just as the effects and the fruitage of the uterine life are not to be found in that dark and narrow place, and only when the child is transferred to this wide earth do the benefits and uses of growth and development in that previous world become revealed—so likewise reward and punishment, heaven and hell, requital and retribution for actions done in this present life, will stand revealed in that other world beyond. And just as, if human life in the womb were limited to that uterine world, existence there would be nonsensical, irrelevant—so too if the life of this world, the deeds here done and their fruitage, did not come forth in the world beyond, the whole process would be irrational and foolish.

Know then that the Lord God possesseth invisible realms which the human intellect can never hope to fathom nor the mind of man conceive. When once thou hast cleansed the channel of thy spiritual sense from the pollution of this worldly life, then wilt thou breathe in the sweet scents of holiness that blow from the blissful bowers of that heavenly land.

The Glory rest upon thee, and upon whosoever turneth toward and gazeth on the Kingdom of the All-Glorious, which the Lord hath sanctified beyond the understanding of those who are neglectful of Him, and hath hid from the eyes of those who show Him pride.

Summary:

The passage addresses the concept of reincarnation, refuting it as an absurdity in the sight of God. It discusses the arguments of reincarnationists and clarifies that while return is mentioned in Holy Scriptures, it refers to the recurrence of qualities and inner realities, not specific individual souls. The text emphasizes the transient nature of earthly life, questioning the desire for repeated visits to this world. The lovers of God seek solace and ease in the eternal realm, dismissing the notion of finding reward or punishment for past lives on Earth. The analogy of the womb is used to

illustrate the limited understanding of life's purpose within its confines, just as the true outcomes of actions become apparent in the afterlife.

Key Points:

1. Appreciation and Hope:

- Expresses joy at the recipient's letter and wishes for continuous renewal through the breaths of the All-Merciful.

2. Reincarnation Refuted:

- Reincarnation is considered an ancient belief held by various peoples and philosophers.
- Arguments of reincarnationists, based on justice and past wrongs, are presented.
- The belief in reincarnation is deemed absurd in the sight of God.

3. Return of Qualities, Not Souls:

- Return, as mentioned in Holy Scriptures, refers to the recurrence of qualities, not individual souls.
- The analogy of lamplight, roses, and fruit is used to illustrate the return of qualities, not specific identities.

4. Questioning Desire for Earthly Life:

- Questions the desire for repeated visits to earthly life, considering the trials and suffering.
- The experiences of the Holy Ones are cited as evidence against the desirability of returning to earthly life.

5. Transcending Earthly Understanding:

- Rejects the notion of seeking reward or punishment for past lives on Earth.
- Uses the analogy of the womb to illustrate the limited understanding of life's purpose within its confines.
- Emphasizes that the true outcomes of actions become apparent in the afterlife.
- Encourages perceiving invisible realms through a cleansed spiritual sense.

Questions and Answers:

1. Q: How does the passage refute the concept of reincarnation?

A: It deems reincarnation absurd in the sight of God, pointing out logical inconsistencies in the arguments of reincarnationists.

2. Q: What does the passage suggest about the return mentioned in Holy Scriptures?

A: The return refers to the recurrence of qualities, conditions, effects, and inner realities, not specific, individual souls.

3. Q: Why does the passage question the desire for repeated visits to earthly life?

A: The suffering and trials experienced in earthly life are cited, and the experiences of the Holy Ones are presented as evidence against the desirability of returning.

4. Q: What analogy is used to illustrate the return of qualities?

A: The analogy of lamplight, roses, and fruit is used to illustrate the return of qualities, not specific identities.

5. Q: How does the passage emphasize the limited understanding of life's purpose within the confines of the Earth?

A: The analogy of the womb is used to illustrate the limited understanding of life's purpose within its confines, just as the true outcomes of actions become apparent in the afterlife.

– 157 –

O ye who are strongly attracted! O ye who are mindful! O ye who are advancing unto the Kingdom of God! Verily with all my heart and soul and with all lowliness do I supplicate the Lord God to make of you ensigns of guidance, banners of righteousness, wellsprings of understanding and knowledge, that through you He may lead the seekers unto the straight path and guide them to the broad way of truth in this mightiest of ages.

O ye loved ones of God! Know ye that the world is even as a mirage rising over the sands, that the thirsty mistaketh for water. The wine of this world is but a vapor in the desert, its pity and compassion but toil and trouble, the repose it proffereth only weariness and sorrow. Abandon it to those who belong to it, and turn your faces unto the Kingdom of your Lord the All-Merciful, that His grace and bounty may cast their dawning splendors over you, and a heavenly table may be sent down for you, and your Lord may bless you, and shower His riches upon you to gladden your bosoms and fill your hearts with bliss, to attract your minds, and cleanse your souls, and console your eyes.

O ye loved ones of God! Is there any giver save God? He singleth out for His mercy whomsoever He willeth. Erelong will He open before you the gates of His knowledge and fill up your hearts with His love. He will cheer your souls with the gentle winds of His holiness and make bright your faces with the splendors of His lights, and exalt the memory of you amongst all peoples. Your Lord is verily the Compassionate, the Merciful.

He will come to your aid with invisible hosts, and support you with armies of inspiration from the Concourse above; He will send unto you sweet perfumes from the highest Paradise, and waft over you the pure breathings that blow from the rose gardens of the Company on high. He will breathe into your hearts the spirit of life, cause you to enter the Ark of salvation, and reveal unto you His clear tokens and signs. Verily is this abounding grace. Verily is this the victory that none can deny.

Summary:

The passage is a supplication and exhortation, urging the believers to be ensigns of guidance, banners of righteousness, and wellsprings of understanding. It emphasizes the transient nature of the material world, likening it to a mirage, and encourages the believers to turn away from its fleeting pleasures. The focus is on seeking the Kingdom of God, where grace, bounty, and divine riches await. The believers are assured of God's mercy, love, and support, with the promise of

invisible hosts and inspiration from the Concourse above. The passage concludes with the affirmation of abounding grace and an inevitable victory.

Key Points:

1. Supplication for Spiritual Advancement:

- Urges believers to become ensigns of guidance, banners of righteousness, and wellsprings of understanding.
- Supplicates with heart and soul for God's assistance in guiding seekers to the straight path.

2. Worldly Life as a Mirage:

- Describes the world as a mirage rising over the sands, deceiving the thirsty.
- Portrays the wine of this world as a fleeting vapor, offering only toil and trouble.

3. Turn Away from the World:

- Encourages believers to abandon the worldly mirage and turn towards the Kingdom of God.
- Promises that God's grace will cast its dawning splendors, and heavenly blessings will be sent down.

4. Divine Support and Mercy:

- Affirms that God is the ultimate giver, singling out for His mercy whomsoever He wills.
- Promises the opening of gates of knowledge, filling hearts with love, and exalting the believers' memory amongst all peoples.

5. Assurance of Victory and Grace:

- Assures believers of God's invisible hosts and inspiration from the Concourse above.
- Promises the fragrance of Paradise, the breathings from rose gardens, and the revelation of clear tokens and signs.
- Concludes with a declaration of abounding grace and an undeniable victory.

Questions and Answers:

1. Q: What does the passage liken the material world to?

A: It likens the world to a mirage rising over the sands, which the thirsty mistake for water.

2. Q: What is the encouragement regarding the believers' focus?

A: Believers are encouraged to turn away from the transient pleasures of the world and seek the Kingdom of God.

3. Q: How is God's support and mercy described?

A: God is described as the ultimate giver, singling out for His mercy whomsoever He wills.

4. Q: What promises are made regarding divine support?

A: The promises include the opening of gates of knowledge, filling hearts with love, and exalting the believers' memory amongst all peoples.

5. Q: What assurance is given at the conclusion of the passage?

A: The passage concludes with a declaration of abounding grace and an inevitable victory that none can deny.

– 158 –

Grieve thou not over the ascension of my beloved Breakwell, for he hath risen unto a rose garden of splendors within the Abhá Paradise, sheltered by the mercy of his mighty Lord, and he is crying at the top of his voice: “O that my people could know how graciously my Lord hath forgiven me, and made me to be of those who have attained His Presence!”¹

O Breakwell, O my dear one!

Where now is thy fair face? Where is thy fluent tongue? Where thy clear brow? Where thy bright comeliness?

O Breakwell, O my dear one!

Where is thy fire, blazing with God’s love? Where is thy rapture at His holy breaths? Where are thy praises, lifted unto Him? Where is thy rising up to serve His Cause?

O Breakwell, O my dear one!

Where are thy beauteous eyes? Thy smiling lips? The princely cheek? The graceful form?

O Breakwell, O my dear one!

Thou hast quit this earthly world and risen upward to the Kingdom, thou hast reached unto the grace of the invisible realm, and offered thyself at the threshold of its Lord.

O Breakwell, O my dear one!

Thou hast left the lamp that was thy body here, the glass that was thy human form, thy earthy elements, thy way of life below.

O Breakwell, O my dear one!

Thou hast lit a flame within the lamp of the Company on high, thou hast set foot in the Abhá Paradise, thou hast found a shelter in the shadow of the Blessed Tree, thou hast attained His meeting in the haven of Heaven.

O Breakwell, O my dear one!

Thou art now a bird of Heaven, thou hast quit thine earthly nest, and soared away to a garden of holiness in the kingdom of thy Lord. Thou hast risen to a station filled with light.

O Breakwell, O my dear one!

Thy song is even as birdsong now, thou pourest forth verses as to the mercy of thy Lord; of Him Who forgiveth ever, thou wert a thankful servant, wherefore hast thou entered into exceeding bliss.

O Breakwell, O my dear one!

Thy Lord hath verily singled thee out for His love, and hath led thee into His precincts of holiness, and made thee to enter the garden of those who are His close companions, and hath blessed thee with beholding His beauty.

O Breakwell, O my dear one!

Thou hast won eternal life, and the bounty that faileth never, and a life to please thee well, and plenteous grace.

O Breakwell, O my dear one!

Thou art become a star in the supernal sky, and a lamp amid the angels of high Heaven; a living spirit in the most exalted Kingdom, throned in eternity.

O Breakwell, O my dear one!

I ask of God to draw thee ever closer, hold thee ever faster; to rejoice thy heart with nearness

to His presence, to fill thee with light and still more light, to grant thee still more beauty, and to bestow upon thee power and great glory.

O Breakwell, O my dear one!

At all times do I call thee to mind. I shall never forget thee. I pray for thee by day, by night; I see thee plain before me, as if in open day.

O Breakwell, O my dear one!

Summary:

The passage is a poetic and heartfelt expression mourning the ascension of Breakwell, who is described as having risen to a rose garden of splendors in the Abhá Paradise. The verses speak of Breakwell's attributes, his departure from the earthly world, and his ascent to the Kingdom of God.

The imagery is rich, portraying Breakwell as a bird of Heaven, a star in the supernal sky, and a living spirit in the most exalted Kingdom.

Key Points:

1. Reassurance and Comfort:

- The reader is encouraged not to grieve over Breakwell's ascension.
- Breakwell is described as having risen to a rose garden of splendors within the Abhá Paradise.

2. Poetic Address to Breakwell:

- A series of verses address Breakwell, reflecting on his earthly attributes.
- Questions are posed about Breakwell's fair face, fluent tongue, clear brow, and bright comeliness.

3. Spiritual Transformation:

- Breakwell is depicted as having left the earthly world and risen upward to the Kingdom.
- His earthly elements and way of life are left behind as he reaches the grace of the invisible realm.

4. Attainment of Divine Presence:

- Breakwell is acknowledged for lighting a flame within the lamp of the Company on high.
- He has found shelter in the shadow of the Blessed Tree and attained the meeting of his Lord.

5. Eternal Life and Spiritual Station:

- Breakwell is now described as a bird of Heaven, having quit his earthly nest and soared to a garden of holiness.
- He has won eternal life, plenteous grace, and a life pleasing to him well.

6. Prayer and Remembrance:

- Prayers are offered for Breakwell to be drawn closer to God, to be filled with light, beauty, power, and great glory.
- The speaker expresses constant remembrance and unending prayers for Breakwell.

Questions and Answers:

1. Q: How is Breakwell described in relation to the Abhá Paradise?

A: Breakwell is described as having risen to a rose garden of splendors within the Abhá Paradise.

2. Q: What imagery is used to depict Breakwell's spiritual transformation?

A: Breakwell is portrayed as a bird of Heaven, having left his earthly nest and soared to a garden of holiness in the Kingdom of God.

3. Q: How is Breakwell remembered and prayed for?

A: The speaker expresses constant remembrance of Breakwell, praying for him day and night, calling him to mind and never forgetting him.

4. Q: What attributes and earthly elements are mentioned in relation to Breakwell?

A: Attributes like his fair face, fluent tongue, clear brow, and bright comeliness are addressed. Breakwell's departure from earthly elements and way of life is also emphasized.

5. Q: What is the ultimate fate and spiritual station of Breakwell?

A: Breakwell is described as having won eternal life, plenteous grace, and a life pleasing to him well. He is likened to a star in the supernal sky and a living spirit in the most exalted Kingdom.

– 159 –

As to thy question, doth every soul without exception achieve life everlasting? Know thou that immortality belongeth to those souls in whom hath been breathed the spirit of life from God. All save these are lifeless—they are the dead, even as Christ hath explained in the Gospel text. He whose eyes the Lord hath opened will see the souls of men in the stations they will occupy after their release from the body. He will find the living ones thriving within the precincts of their Lord, and the dead sunk down in the lowest abyss of perdition.

Know thou that every soul is fashioned after the nature of God, each being pure and holy at his birth. Afterwards, however, the individuals will vary according to what they acquire of virtues or vices in this world. Although all existent beings are in their very nature created in ranks or degrees, for capacities are various, nevertheless every individual is born holy and pure, and only thereafter may he become defiled.

And further, although the degrees of being are various, yet all are good. Observe the human body, its limbs, its members, the eye, the ear, the organs of smell, of taste, the hands, the fingernails. Notwithstanding the differences among all these parts, each one within the limitations of its own being participateth in a coherent whole. If one of them faileth it must be healed, and should no remedy avail, that part must be removed.

Summary:

The passage addresses the concept of immortality and the nature of the soul. It emphasizes that true life everlasting is attained by souls in whom the spirit of life from God is breathed. The passage also highlights the varying states of souls after death, with some thriving in the presence of God and others sinking into perdition. Additionally, it underscores the inherent purity of every soul at birth, which may later be influenced by acquired virtues or vices. The analogy of the human body's

diverse but interconnected parts is used to illustrate the concept that all individuals, despite their differences, contribute to a coherent whole.

Key Points:

1. Immortality and the Nature of the Soul:

- True immortality is for souls in whom the spirit of life from God resides.
- Souls that lack this divine spirit are considered lifeless, as explained in the Gospel text.

2. Post-Mortal States:

- Souls are envisioned in the stations they will occupy after being released from the body.
- Living souls thrive within the precincts of their Lord, while the dead sink into the lowest abyss of perdition.

3. Inherent Purity at Birth:

- Every soul is initially fashioned after the nature of God, born holy and pure.
- Subsequent variations in individuals occur based on their acquired virtues or vices in the world.

4. Varied Degrees of Being:

- Although all beings have varying degrees of existence, all are inherently good.
- The analogy of the human body's diverse organs is used to illustrate the coherence within these variations.

5. Healing and Removal:

- The analogy continues by explaining that if a part of the body fails, it must be healed.
- If healing is not possible, the part may need to be removed for the well-being of the whole.

Questions and Answers:

1. Q: What is the determining factor for achieving true life everlasting?

A: Souls in whom the spirit of life from God is breathed achieve true life everlasting.

2. Q: How are souls envisioned after being released from the body?

A: Souls are envisioned in the stations they will occupy, either thriving within the precincts of their Lord or sinking into the lowest abyss of perdition.

3. Q: What is the initial state of every soul at birth?

A: Every soul is born holy and pure, fashioned after the nature of God.

4. Q: How are variations among individuals explained in the passage?

A: Individuals may vary based on what they acquire of virtues or vices in this world, despite their inherent purity at birth.

5. Q: What analogy is used to illustrate the concept of varied degrees of being?

A: The analogy of the human body's diverse organs is used to illustrate the coherence within the variations of existence.

O thou sincere and loyal handmaid of the Lord! I have read thy letter. Thou art truly attached to the Kingdom and devoted to the All-Glorious Horizon. I beg of God in His bounty to make thee to burn ever more brightly in the fire of His love, as each day passeth by.

Thou wert, it appeareth, in doubt as to whether to write, or to teach the Faith. Teaching the Faith is essential, and for the present teaching is preferable for thee. Whensoever thou dost find an opportunity, loose thy tongue and guide the human race.

Thou didst ask as to acquiring knowledge: read thou the Books and Tablets of God, and the articles written to demonstrate the truth of this Faith. Included among them are the Íqán, which hath been translated into English, the works of Mírzá Abu'l-Faḍl, and those of some others among the believers. In the days to come a great number of holy Tablets and other sacred writings will be translated, and thou shouldst read these as well. Likewise, ask thou of God that the magnet of His love should draw unto thee the knowledge of Him. Once a soul becometh holy in all things, purified, sanctified, the gates of the knowledge of God will open wide before his eyes.

Thou hast written of the dear handmaid of God, Mrs. Goodall. That soul enraptured of God is truly serving the Faith at all times, and doing whatever she can to scatter abroad the heavenly splendors. If she continue in this same way, very great results will follow in a time to come. The main thing is to remain staunch and firmly rooted, and persevere to the end. It is my hope that through the high endeavors of the handmaids of the Lord, those foothills and that ocean¹ shore will grow so bright with the love of God as to cast their beams to the ends of the earth.

Thou didst ask whether, at the advent of the Kingdom of God, every soul was saved. The Sun of Truth hath shone forth in splendor over all the world, and its luminous rising is man's salvation and his eternal life—but only he is of the saved who hath opened wide the eye of his discernment and beheld that glory.

Likewise didst thou ask whether, in this Bahá'í Dispensation, the spiritual will ultimately prevail. It is certain that spirituality will defeat materialism, that the heavenly will subdue the human, and that through divine education the masses of mankind generally will take great steps forward in all degrees of life—except for those who are blind and deaf and mute and dead. How can such as they understand the light? Though the sun's rays illumine every darkest corner of the globe, still the blind can have no share in the glory, and though the rain of heavenly mercy come down in torrents over all the earth, no shrub or flower will bloom from a barren land.

Summary:

The letter addresses a sincere and loyal handmaid of the Lord, encouraging her attachment to the Kingdom and devotion to the All-Glorious Horizon. It emphasizes the essential nature of teaching the Faith and recommends reading sacred writings for acquiring knowledge. The letter mentions Mrs. Goodall's dedicated service and foresees great results if she continues. Questions are

answered about the salvation of souls at the advent of the Kingdom of God and the ultimate prevalence of spirituality over materialism in the Bahá'í Dispensation.

Key Points:

1. Encouragement to the Handmaid:

- The recipient is praised for her attachment to the Kingdom and devotion to the All-Glorious Horizon.
- A prayer is made for her to burn ever more brightly in the fire of God's love.

2. Teaching the Faith:

- Teaching the Faith is considered essential, and for the present, it is preferable for the recipient.
- The recipient is encouraged to seize opportunities to teach and guide the human race.

3. Acquiring Knowledge:

- Reading the Books and Tablets of God, including the Íqán and works by Mírzá Abu'l-Faḍl, is recommended.
- Future translations of holy Tablets and sacred writings should be read.
- A prayer is suggested to ask God to draw knowledge unto the recipient.

4. Service of Mrs. Goodall:

- Mrs. Goodall's dedicated service to the Faith is acknowledged.
- The importance of remaining staunch, firmly rooted, and persevering is highlighted.

5. Salvation and Victory of Spirituality:

- The salvation of souls at the advent of the Kingdom of God is discussed, emphasizing the importance of discernment.
- Spirituality is predicted to defeat materialism in the Bahá'í Dispensation, leading humanity forward, except for those spiritually unresponsive.

Questions and Answers:

1. Q: Is teaching the Faith essential, and what is recommended for the recipient?

A: Teaching the Faith is essential, and for the present, it is preferable for the recipient. She is encouraged to guide the human race whenever there is an opportunity.

2. Q: What works are recommended for acquiring knowledge?

A: The recipient is advised to read the Books and Tablets of God, including the Íqán, works by Mírzá Abu'l-Faḍl, and future translations of sacred writings.

3. Q: How is the service of Mrs. Goodall acknowledged, and what is foreseen for her if she continues?

A: Mrs. Goodall's dedicated service is acknowledged, and great results are foreseen for her if she continues in the same way.

4. Q: Are all souls saved at the advent of the Kingdom of God?

A: The salvation of souls depends on opening wide the eye of discernment and beholding the glory of the Sun of Truth.

5. Q: Will spirituality ultimately prevail in the Bahá'í Dispensation, and what exceptions are mentioned?

A: Spirituality will ultimately prevail, defeating materialism, except for those who are blind, deaf, mute, and spiritually dead.

– 161 –

O thou who seekest the Kingdom of heaven! This world is even as the body of man, and the Kingdom of God is as the spirit of life. See how dark and narrow is the physical world of man's body, and what a prey it is to diseases and ills. On the other hand, how fresh and bright is the realm of the human spirit. Judge thou from this metaphor how the world of the Kingdom hath shone down, and how its laws have been made to work in this nether realm. Although the spirit is hidden from view, still its commandments shine out like rays of light upon the world of the human body. In the same way, although the Kingdom of heaven is hidden from the sight of this unwitting people, still, to him who seeth with the inner eye, it is plain as day.

Wherefore dwell thou ever in the Kingdom, and be thou oblivious of this world below. Be thou so wholly absorbed in the emanations of the spirit that nothing in the world of man will distract thee.

Summary:

The letter advises the recipient to seek the Kingdom of heaven, drawing a metaphor between the physical world of man's body and the spiritual realm. It emphasizes the limitations and vulnerabilities of the physical world while highlighting the freshness and brightness of the spiritual realm. The commandments of the Kingdom are compared to the hidden yet influential nature of

the human spirit. The recipient is encouraged to dwell in the Kingdom, remaining absorbed in spiritual emanations and oblivious to the distractions of the worldly realm.

Key Points:

1. Metaphor of the Body and Spirit:

- The physical world is likened to the body of man, dark, narrow, and susceptible to diseases.
- The Kingdom of God is compared to the spirit of life, fresh, bright, and transcendent.

2. Visibility of Kingdom Laws:

- Though the spirit is hidden, its commandments shine like rays of light on the world of the human body.
- Similarly, the Kingdom of heaven, though hidden from the view of many, is clear to those with the inner eye.

3. Encouragement to Dwell in the Kingdom:

- The recipient is advised to dwell in the Kingdom of heaven.
- A call to be oblivious to the distractions of the worldly realm.

4. Absorption in Spiritual Emanations:

- The recipient is encouraged to be wholly absorbed in the emanations of the spirit.
- Distraction from the world of man is emphasized for a deeper connection with the spiritual realm.

Questions and Answers:

1. Q: What metaphor is used to describe the physical world and the Kingdom of God?

A: The physical world is likened to the body of man, and the Kingdom of God is compared to the spirit of life.

2. Q: How are the commandments of the Kingdom of heaven described?

A: Although hidden, the commandments of the Kingdom shine out like rays of light upon the world of the human body.

3. Q: What advice is given regarding dwelling in the Kingdom?

A: The recipient is advised to dwell ever in the Kingdom and be oblivious to the world below.

4. Q: What is the encouragement regarding absorption in the spiritual realm?

A: The recipient is encouraged to be wholly absorbed in the emanations of the spirit, avoiding distraction from the world of man.

5. Q: How is the visibility of the Kingdom of heaven described to those with the inner eye?

A: Though hidden from the unwitting people, the Kingdom is plain as day to those who see with the inner eye.

O ye dear friends of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá! At all times do I await your good news, longing as I do to hear that ye are making progress from day to day, and are becoming ever more illumined by the light of guidance.

The blessings of Bahá'u'lláh are a shoreless sea, and even life everlasting is only a dewdrop therefrom. The waves of that sea are continually lapping against the hearts of the friends, and from those waves there come intimations of the spirit and ardent pulsings of the soul, until the heart giveth way, and willing or not, turneth humbly in prayer unto the Kingdom of the Lord. Wherefore do all ye can to disengage your inner selves, that ye may at every moment reflect new splendors from the Sun of Truth.

Ye live, all of you, within the heart of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, and with every breath do I turn my face toward the Threshold of Oneness and call down blessings upon you, each and all.

Summary:

'Abdu'l-Bahá expresses anticipation for good news from the friends, expressing a continual longing for their progress and enlightenment. The blessings of Bahá'u'lláh are described as a shoreless sea, and life everlasting is considered a dewdrop from that vast expanse. The waves of this sea touch the hearts of the friends, prompting spiritual intimations and soulful pulsings. The friends are urged to disengage their inner selves to reflect new splendors from the Sun of Truth.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá affirms the deep connection between himself and the friends, expressing the continuous turning of his face toward the Threshold of Oneness to invoke blessings upon them.

Key Points:

1. Anticipation for Good News:

- ‘Abdu’l-Bahá eagerly awaits news from the friends.
- Longing for their progress and increasing enlightenment is expressed.

2. Blessings of Bahá’u’lláh:

- Described as a shoreless sea, the blessings are vast and limitless.
- Life everlasting is compared to a dewdrop from this expansive sea.

3. Waves of Spiritual Influence:

- The waves of the sea of blessings touch the hearts of the friends.
- Intimations of the spirit and ardent pulsings of the soul result from these waves.

4. Disengaging Inner Selves:

- The friends are urged to disengage their inner selves.
- Reflection of new splendors from the Sun of Truth is encouraged.

5. Deep Connection with ‘Abdu’l-Bahá:

- The friends are said to live within the heart of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá.
- Continuous turning of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s face toward the Threshold of Oneness for blessings upon all.

Questions and Answers:

1. Q: What does ‘Abdu’l-Bahá express anticipation for in the letter?

A: ‘Abdu’l-Bahá eagerly awaits good news from the friends, desiring to hear about their progress and increasing enlightenment.

2. Q: How are the blessings of Bahá’u’lláh described?

A: Described as a shoreless sea, the blessings are vast and limitless, with life everlasting likened to a dewdrop from this expansive sea.

3. Q: What are the effects of the waves of the sea of blessings on the hearts of the friends?

A: The waves prompt spiritual intimations and ardent pulsings of the soul, leading the hearts to turn in prayer toward the Kingdom of the Lord.

4. Q: What is the advice given regarding the inner selves of the friends?

A: The friends are urged to disengage their inner selves, allowing them to reflect new splendors from the Sun of Truth.

5. Q: How does ‘Abdu’l-Bahá express his connection with the friends?

A: ‘Abdu’l-Bahá affirms that the friends live within his heart, and he continuously turns his face toward the Threshold of Oneness to invoke blessings upon them.

O ye two seekers after truth! Your letter was received and its contents noted. As for the letters ye had previously sent, not all were received, while some reached here at a time when the cruelty of the oppressors had so intensified that it was not possible to send a reply. Now this present letter is here, and we are able to answer it, and I have therefore set about writing, in spite of much pressing business, so that ye will know that ye are loved amongst us, and also accepted in the Kingdom of God.

Your questions, however, can be answered only briefly, since there is no time for a detailed reply. The answer to the first question: the souls of the children of the Kingdom, after their separation from the body, ascend unto the realm of everlasting life. But if ye ask as to the place, know ye that the world of existence is a single world, although its stations are various and distinct. For example, the mineral life occupieth its own plane, but a mineral entity is without any awareness at all of the vegetable kingdom, and indeed, with its inner tongue denieth that there is any such kingdom. In the same way, a vegetable entity knoweth nothing of the animal world, remaining completely heedless and ignorant thereof, for the stage of the animal is higher than that of the vegetable, and the vegetable is veiled from the animal world and inwardly denieth the existence of that world—all this while animal, vegetable and mineral dwell together in the one world. In the same way the animal remaineth totally unaware of that power of the human mind which graspeth universal ideas and layeth bare the secrets of creation—so that a man who liveth in the east can make plans and arrangements for the west; can unravel mysteries; although located on the continent of Europe can discover America; although sited on the earth can lay hold of the inner realities of the stars of heaven. Of this power of discovery which belongeth to the human mind, this power which can grasp abstract and universal ideas, the animal remaineth totally ignorant, and indeed denieth its existence.

In the same way, the denizens of this earth are completely unaware of the world of the Kingdom and deny the existence thereof. They ask, for example: “Where is the Kingdom? Where is the Lord of the Kingdom?” These people are even as the mineral and the vegetable, who know nothing whatever of the animal and the human realm; they see it not; they find it not. Yet the mineral and vegetable, the animal and man, are all living here together in this world of existence.

As to the second question: the tests and trials of God take place in this world, not in the world of the Kingdom.

The answer to the third question is this, that in the other world the human reality doth not assume a physical form, rather doth it take on a heavenly form, made up of elements of that heavenly realm.

And the answer to the fourth question: the center of the Sun of Truth is in the supernal world—the Kingdom of God. Those souls who are pure and unsullied, upon the dissolution of their elemental frames, hasten away to the world of God, and that world is within this world. The people of this world, however, are unaware of that world, and are even as the mineral and the vegetable that know nothing of the world of the animal and the world of man.

The answer to the fifth question is this: Bahá’u’lláh hath raised up the tabernacle of the oneness of mankind. Whoso seeketh shelter under this roof will certainly come forth from other dwellings.

And to the sixth question: if on some point or other a difference ariseth among two conflicting groups, let them refer to the Center of the Covenant for a solution to the problem.

And the seventh question: Bahá’u’lláh hath been made manifest to all mankind and He hath invited all to the table of God, the banquet of Divine bounty. Today, however, most of those who sit at that table are the poor, and this is why Christ hath said blessed are the poor, for riches do

prevent the rich from entering the Kingdom; and again, He saith, "It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the Kingdom of God."¹ If, however, the wealth of this world, and worldly glory and repute, do not block his entry therein, that rich man will be favored at the Holy Threshold and accepted by the Lord of the Kingdom.

In brief, Bahá'u'lláh hath become manifest to educate all the peoples of the world. He is the Universal Educator, whether of the rich or the poor, whether of black or white, or of peoples from east or west, or north or south.

Among those who visit 'Akká, some have made great forward strides. Lightless candles, they were set alight; withered, they began to bloom; dead, they were recalled to life and went home with tidings of great joy. But others, in truth, have simply passed through; they have only taken a tour.

O ye twain who are strongly attracted to the Kingdom, thank ye God that ye have made your home a Bahá'í center and a gathering place for the friends.

Summary:

The letter responds to questions from two seekers after truth. The primary points include clarification about the realms of existence, the nature of tests and trials, the form of the human reality in the afterlife, the center of the Sun of Truth, Bahá'u'lláh's oneness of mankind, the resolution of conflicts, and the purpose of Bahá'u'lláh's manifestation. The significance of spiritual

wealth over material riches is emphasized, and the value of their efforts in making their home a Bahá'í center is acknowledged.

Key Points:

1. Single World with Various Stations:

- The world of existence is one, with various and distinct stations.
- Examples are given of the mineral, vegetable, animal, and human realms existing together.

2. Tests and Trials in This World:

- Tests and trials of God take place in this world, not in the world of the Kingdom.

3. Heavenly Form in the Afterlife:

- In the other world, the human reality takes on a heavenly form composed of elements from that realm.

4. Center of the Sun of Truth:

- The center of the Sun of Truth is in the supernal world—the Kingdom of God.
- Souls upon dissolution hasten to the world of God, unseen by the people of this world.

5. Bahá'u'lláh's Oneness of Mankind:

- Bahá'u'lláh has raised the tabernacle of the oneness of mankind.
- Invitation to the banquet of Divine bounty is extended to all, with emphasis on the acceptance of the poor.

6. Resolution of Conflicts:

- Conflicting groups are advised to refer to the Center of the Covenant for solutions.

7. Bahá'u'lláh's Manifestation for All:

- Bahá'u'lláh is the Universal Educator for all peoples, irrespective of wealth, race, or origin.

8. Value of Spiritual Wealth:

- Riches can prevent the rich from entering the Kingdom, but those unblocked are favored at the Holy Threshold.

9. Acknowledgment of Efforts:

- Appreciation for making their home a Bahá'í center and gathering place for the friends.

Questions and Answers:

1. Q: Where do the souls of the children of the Kingdom ascend after separation from the body?

A: They ascend to the realm of everlasting life within the world of existence.

2. Q: Where do tests and trials of God take place?

A: Tests and trials take place in this world, not in the world of the Kingdom.

3. Q: What form does the human reality take in the other world?

A: It takes on a heavenly form composed of elements from the heavenly realm.

4. Q: Where is the center of the Sun of Truth?

A: The center is in the supernal world—the Kingdom of God.

5. Q: What is the significance of Bahá'u'lláh's manifestation for mankind?

A: Bahá'u'lláh educates all peoples of the world, irrespective of wealth, race, or origin.

6. Q: How should conflicting groups resolve their differences?

A: They should refer to the Center of the Covenant for solutions.

7. Q: Who is favored at the Holy Threshold?

A: Those whose wealth and worldly glory do not block their entry into the Kingdom are favored.

8. Q: What is acknowledged about the recipients of the letter?

A: Appreciation for making their home a Bahá'í center and gathering place for the friends is expressed.

– 164 –

O ye two faithful and assured souls! The letter was received. Praise be to God, it imparted good tidings. California is ready for the promulgation of the Teachings of God. My hope is that ye may strive with heart and soul that the sweet scent may perfume the nostrils....

Convey on my behalf to Mrs. Chase respectful greetings and say: “Mr. Chase is a twinkling star above the horizon of Truth, but at present it is still behind the clouds; soon these shall be dispersed and the radiance of that star shall illumine the state of California. Appreciate thou this bounty that thou hast been his wife and companion in life.”

Every year on the anniversary of the ascension¹ of that blessed soul the friends must visit his tomb on behalf of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá and in the utmost lowliness and humility should with all respect lay on his grave wreaths of flowers and spend all the day in quiet prayer, while turning their faces toward the Kingdom of Signs and mentioning and praising the attributes of that illustrious person.

Summary:

The message conveys good tidings about the readiness of California for the promotion of Bahá'í teachings. Mrs. Chase is praised, and her husband, Mr. Chase, is described as a shining star soon

to illuminate California. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá instructs the friends to annually visit Mr. Chase's tomb, offering flowers and prayers while praising his attributes.

Key Points:

1. Acknowledgment of Good News:

- California is recognized as ready for the dissemination of Bahá'í teachings.
- The message expresses hope for the sweet scent of the Teachings to spread.

2. Message to Mrs. Chase:

- Mrs. Chase is greeted with respectful messages.
- Mr. Chase is described as a star, currently obscured by clouds but destined to radiate in California.
- Appreciation is expressed for Mrs. Chase being Mr. Chase's wife and companion.

3. Annual Tribute to Mr. Chase:

- A yearly tradition is established to honor Mr. Chase on the anniversary of his ascension.
- Friends are instructed to visit his tomb, lay wreaths of flowers, and spend the day in prayer.
- The focus is on humility, respect, and praising Mr. Chase's attributes.

Questions and Answers:

1. Q: What is the main content of the message regarding California?

A: California is recognized as prepared for the promotion of Bahá'í teachings, bringing good tidings.

2. Q: How is Mr. Chase described in the message?

A: Mr. Chase is likened to a shining star, currently behind clouds but destined to illuminate California.

3. Q: What instructions are given regarding Mrs. Chase?

A: Mrs. Chase is greeted with respectful messages, and appreciation is expressed for being Mr. Chase's wife and companion.

4. Q: What annual tradition is established in honor of Mr. Chase?

A: Friends are instructed to visit Mr. Chase's tomb annually, offering flowers, prayers, and praising his attributes.

5. Q: What qualities are emphasized in the instructions for the annual tribute?

A: Humility, respect, and praising Mr. Chase's attributes are highlighted in the annual tribute instructions.

O my God! O my God! Verily Thy servant, humble before the majesty of Thy divine supremacy, lowly at the door of Thy oneness, hath believed in Thee and in Thy verses, hath testified to Thy word, hath been enkindled with the fire of Thy love, hath been immersed in the depths of the ocean of Thy knowledge, hath been attracted by Thy breezes, hath relied upon Thee, hath turned his face to Thee, hath offered his supplications to Thee, and hath been assured

of Thy pardon and forgiveness. He hath abandoned this mortal life and hath flown to the kingdom of immortality, yearning for the favor of meeting Thee.

O Lord, glorify his station, shelter him under the pavilion of Thy supreme mercy, cause him to enter Thy glorious paradise, and perpetuate his existence in Thine exalted rose garden, that he may plunge into the sea of light in the world of mysteries.

Verily, Thou art the Generous, the Powerful, the Forgiver and the Bestower.

O thou assured soul, thou maidservant of God...! Be not grieved at the death of thy respected husband. He hath, verily, attained the meeting of his Lord at the seat of Truth in the presence of the potent King. Do not suppose that thou hast lost him. The veil shall be lifted and thou shalt behold his face illumined in the Supreme Concourse. Just as God, the Exalted, hath said, "Him will We surely quicken to a happy life." Supreme importance should be attached, therefore, not to this first creation but rather to the future life.

Summary:

The prayer expresses the believer's humble acknowledgment of God's supremacy, faith, love, and reliance on divine forgiveness. The supplicant seeks God's mercy for a departed soul, asking for glorification, sheltering under divine mercy, and entry into the paradise of immortality. The

response encourages the grieving soul not to be saddened by the death of a loved one, assuring that the departed has attained God's presence and emphasizing the importance of the afterlife.

Key Points:

1. Believer's Humility and Faith:

- The believer expresses humility before God's divine supremacy.
- Faith, love, and reliance on God's forgiveness are acknowledged.

2. Supplication for Departed Soul:

- The departed soul is described as having believed, testified, and immersed in God's love.
- Supplication for God to glorify the soul's station, grant mercy, and perpetuate existence in the exalted rose garden.

3. Assurance for the Grieving Soul:

- The grieving soul is reassured not to be saddened by the death of the loved one.
- The departed has attained God's presence and will be beheld in the Supreme Concourse.

4. Emphasis on the Future Life:

- The importance of the future life is highlighted over the first creation.
- A reference is made to the soul's happy life in the afterlife.

5. Closing Blessings:

- Closing with attributes of God: the Generous, Powerful, Forgiver, and Bestower.

Questions and Answers:

1. Q: What qualities and beliefs does the supplicant express in the prayer?

A: Humility, faith, love, reliance on God's forgiveness, and immersion in God's knowledge.

2. Q: What does the supplicant request for the departed soul?

A: Glorification, shelter under divine mercy, entry into the paradise of immortality, and immersion into the sea of light.

3. Q: How is the grieving soul advised regarding the death of a loved one?

A: The grieving soul is reassured not to be saddened, as the departed has attained God's presence and will be seen in the Supreme Concourse.

4. Q: What emphasis does the response place on the afterlife?

A: The importance of the future life is highlighted, emphasizing its significance over the first creation.

5. Q: How does the prayer close?

A: The prayer closes with blessings, invoking God's attributes as the Generous, Powerful, Forgiver, and Bestower.

O servant of Bahá! Be self-sacrificing in the path of God, and wing thy flight unto the heavens of the love of the Abhá Beauty, for any movement animated by love moveth from the periphery to the center, from space to the Daystar of the universe. Perchance thou deemest this to be difficult, but I tell thee that such cannot be the case, for when the motivating and guiding power is the divine force of magnetism it is possible, by its aid, to traverse time and space easily and swiftly. Glory be upon the people of Bahá.

Summary:

The message encourages the servant of Bahá to be self-sacrificing in God's path, urging them to soar to the heavens of the love of the Abhá Beauty. It emphasizes that movements driven by love can transcend space and time effortlessly through the divine force of magnetism.

Key Points:**1. Call to Self-Sacrifice:**

- The servant is called to be self-sacrificing in the path of God.
- The focus is on dedicating oneself entirely to the divine cause.

2. Flight to the Heavens of Love:

- The servant is urged to wing their flight to the heavens of the love of the Abhá Beauty.
- Love is presented as the driving force behind spiritual ascent.

3. Movement Animated by Love:

- Movements animated by love are described as moving from the periphery to the center.
- Love is portrayed as a transformative force guiding one towards spiritual fulfillment.

4. Divine Force of Magnetism:

- The divine force of magnetism is introduced as the motivating and guiding power.
- With this divine force, traversing time and space becomes easy and swift.

5. Glory to the People of Bahá:

- The message concludes with an expression of glory upon the people of Bahá.
- This signifies recognition and honor for those who follow the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh.

Questions and Answers:

1. Q: What is the servant of Bahá encouraged to be in the path of God?

A: The servant is encouraged to be self-sacrificing in the path of God.

2. Q: What is the destination emphasized for the servant's flight?

A: The servant is urged to soar to the heavens of the love of the Abhá Beauty.

3. Q: How is the movement driven by love described?

A: Movements animated by love are described as moving from the periphery to the center.

4. Q: What is introduced as the motivating and guiding power?

A: The divine force of magnetism is introduced as the motivating and guiding power.

5. Q: How is the ease of traversing time and space emphasized?

A: With the aid of the divine force of magnetism, traversing time and space becomes easy and swift.

Thou hadst asked about fate, predestination and will. Fate and predestination consist in the necessary and indispensable relationships which exist in the realities of things. These relationships have been placed in the realities of existent beings through the power of creation and every incident is a consequence of the necessary relationship. For example, God hath created a relation between the sun and the terrestrial globe that the rays of the sun should shine and the soil should yield. These relationships constitute predestination, and the manifestation thereof in the plane of existence is fate. Will is that active force which controlleth these relationships and these incidents. Such is the epitome of the explanation of fate and predestination. I have no time for a detailed explanation. Ponder over this; the reality of fate, predestination and will shall be made manifest.

Summary:

The passage addresses the concepts of fate, predestination, and will. It explains that fate and predestination are inherent relationships in the realities of things, established through the power of

creation. Every incident is a consequence of these necessary relationships. Will is presented as the active force controlling these relationships and incidents.

Key Points:

1. Definition of Fate and Predestination:

- Fate and predestination are described as necessary and indispensable relationships inherent in the realities of existent beings.
- These relationships are established through the power of creation.

2. Illustrative Example:

- An example is provided to illustrate fate and predestination: the relationship between the sun and the terrestrial globe, resulting in sunlight and the fertility of the soil.

3. Manifestation in Existence:

- Fate is explained as the manifestation of these necessary relationships in the plane of existence.

4. Definition of Will:

- Will is defined as the active force that controls the relationships and incidents governed by fate and predestination.

5. Limited Explanation:

- The speaker expresses a constraint on time and provides a concise explanation, inviting further contemplation on the concepts of fate, predestination, and will.

Questions and Answers:

1. Q: What do fate and predestination consist of according to the passage?

A: Fate and predestination consist of necessary and indispensable relationships in the realities of existent beings, established through the power of creation.

2. Q: How is fate illustrated in the passage?

A: An example is given: the relationship between the sun and the terrestrial globe, resulting in sunlight and soil fertility.

3. Q: What is will defined as in the context of fate and predestination?

A: Will is defined as the active force that controls the relationships and incidents governed by fate and predestination.

4. Q: How is fate manifested in the plane of existence?

A: Fate is explained as the manifestation of necessary relationships in the plane of existence.

5. Q: What is the speaker's response to the limited explanation provided?

A: The speaker acknowledges the limited time for a detailed explanation and encourages further contemplation on the concepts of fate, predestination, and will.

O thou lady of the Kingdom! Praise thou God that in this age, the age of the dispensation of Bahá'u'lláh, thou hast been awakened, hast been made aware of the Manifestation of the Lord of Hosts. All the people of the world are buried in the graves of nature, or are slumbering, heedless and unaware. Just as Christ saith: "I may come when you are not aware. The coming of the Son of Man is like the coming of a thief into a house, the owner of which is utterly unaware."

In brief, my hope is that from the bounties of Bahá'u'lláh, thou mayest daily advance in the Kingdom, that thou mayest become a heavenly angel, confirmed by the breaths of the Holy Spirit, and mayest erect a structure that shall eternally remain firm and unshakable....

These days are very precious; grasp the present opportunity and ignite a candle that shall never be extinguished, and which shall pour out its light eternally illuminating the world of mankind!

Summary:

The passage urges gratitude for awakening to the dispensation of Bahá'u'lláh. It emphasizes the oblivious state of humanity and likens Bahá'u'lláh's advent to the unexpected arrival of a thief. The hope is expressed for continuous advancement in the Kingdom, becoming a confirmed

heavenly angel, and contributing to an everlasting, unshakable structure. The urgency of seizing the present opportunity to illuminate the world is stressed.

Key Points:

1. Gratitude for Awareness:

- Acknowledges and praises the recipient for being awakened to the dispensation of Bahá'u'lláh in the present age.

2. Humanity's Unaware State:

- Highlights the obliviousness of humanity to the Manifestation of God, drawing a parallel with Christ's metaphor of the coming of the Son of Man.

3. Hope for Advancement:

- Expresses hope for continuous advancement in the Kingdom through the bounties of Bahá'u'lláh.

4. Becoming a Heavenly Angel:

- Encourages the recipient to transform into a heavenly angel, confirmed by the breaths of the Holy Spirit.

5. Erecting an Everlasting Structure:

- Urges the recipient to contribute to building a structure that will remain firm and unshakable eternally.

6. Seizing the Present Opportunity:

- Emphasizes the preciousness of the present days and urges the recipient to ignite a candle of eternal light to illuminate the world.

Questions and Answers:

1. Q: What does the passage compare Bahá'u'lláh's advent to?

A: The advent of Bahá'u'lláh is likened to the unexpected arrival of a thief, as mentioned in Christ's metaphor.

2. Q: What is the hope expressed for the recipient?

A: The hope is for the recipient to continuously advance in the Kingdom through the bounties of Bahá'u'lláh.

3. Q: How is the recipient encouraged to transform?

A: The recipient is encouraged to become a heavenly angel, confirmed by the breaths of the Holy Spirit.

4. Q: What structure is the recipient urged to contribute to?

A: The recipient is urged to contribute to building a structure that will remain firm and unshakable eternally.

5. Q: What urgency is emphasized in the passage?

A: The passage emphasizes the urgency of seizing the present opportunity to ignite a candle that will eternally illuminate the world.

– 169 –

O ye two patient souls! Your letter was received. The death of that beloved youth and his separation from you have caused the utmost sorrow and grief; for he winged his flight in the flower of his age and the bloom of his youth to the heavenly nest. But he hath been freed from this sorrow-stricken shelter and hath turned his face toward the everlasting nest of the Kingdom, and, being delivered from a dark and narrow world, hath hastened to the sanctified realm of light; therein lieth the consolation of our hearts.

The inscrutable divine wisdom underlieth such heartrending occurrences. It is as if a kind gardener transferreth a fresh and tender shrub from a confined place to a wide open area. This transfer is not the cause of the withering, the lessening or the destruction of that shrub; nay, on the contrary, it maketh it to grow and thrive, acquire freshness and delicacy, become green and bear fruit. This hidden secret is well known to the gardener, but those souls who are unaware of this bounty suppose that the gardener, in his anger and wrath, hath uprooted the shrub. Yet to those who are aware, this concealed fact is manifest, and this predestined decree is considered a bounty. Do not feel grieved or disconsolate, therefore, at the ascension of that bird of faithfulness; nay, under all circumstances pray for that youth, supplicating for him forgiveness and the elevation of his station.

I hope that ye will attain the utmost patience, composure and resignation, and I entreat and implore at the Threshold of Oneness, begging for forgiveness and pardon. My hope from the infinite bounties of God is that He may shelter this dove of the garden of faith, and cause him to abide on the branch of the Supreme Concourse, that he may sing in the best of melodies the praise and glorification of the Lord of Names and Attributes.

Summary:

The passage addresses the grief caused by the death of a beloved youth, emphasizing the sorrow yet finding consolation in the divine wisdom behind such occurrences. The analogy of a gardener transferring a shrub to a more favorable environment is used to illustrate that these events lead to growth, freshness, and bearing fruit. The hidden wisdom is perceived by those aware of the divine

plan, considering it a bounty. The believers are encouraged not to grieve but to pray for the youth's forgiveness and elevated station, seeking patience, composure, and resignation.

Key Points:

1. Expression of Grief:

- Acknowledges the sorrow and grief caused by the death of the beloved youth.

2. Divine Wisdom in Occurrences:

- Presents the concept that divine wisdom underlies heartrending occurrences, drawing an analogy with a gardener's actions.

3. Analogy of the Gardener:

- Describes the gardener transferring a shrub to a wider area as an analogy for the deceased youth's journey to the everlasting nest of the Kingdom.

4. Growth and Fruitfulness:

- Highlights that such transitions lead to growth, freshness, and the ability to bear fruit, contrary to appearances.

5. Perception of the Wise:

- Differentiates between the unaware, who may see it as uprooting in anger, and the aware, who recognize the concealed bounty and predestined decree.

6. Consolation in Prayer:

- Encourages prayer for forgiveness and the elevation of the youth's station, finding consolation at the Threshold of Oneness.

Questions and Answers:

1. Q: What is the analogy used to explain the divine wisdom behind heartrending occurrences?

A: The analogy of a gardener transferring a shrub to a more favorable environment is used.

2. Q: How does the passage describe the outcome of the youth's transition?

A: It emphasizes that the transition leads to growth, freshness, and the ability to bear fruit.

3. Q: How is the perception of the unaware different from the aware in the analogy?

A: The unaware might see it as uprooting in anger, while the aware recognize the concealed bounty and predestined decree.

4. Q: What is the encouragement regarding the believers' emotional response to the youth's death?

A: The believers are encouraged not to grieve but to pray for forgiveness and the elevation of the youth's station.

5. Q: What is the overarching message in the passage?

A: The passage aims to console believers by highlighting the hidden wisdom behind heartrending occurrences and encouraging prayer and patience.

O thou seeker of the Kingdom! Thy letter was received. Thou hast written of the severe calamity that hath befallen thee—the death of thy respected husband. That honorable man hath been so subjected to the stress and strain of this world that his greatest wish was for deliverance from it. Such is this mortal abode: a storehouse of afflictions and suffering. It is ignorance that binds man to it, for no comfort can be secured by any soul in this world, from monarch down to the most humble commoner. If once this life should offer a man a sweet cup, a hundred bitter ones will follow; such is the condition of this world. The wise man, therefore, doth not attach himself to this mortal life and doth not depend upon it; at some moments, even, he eagerly wisheth for death that he may thereby be freed from these sorrows and afflictions. Thus it is seen that some, under extreme pressure of anguish, have committed suicide.

As to thy husband, rest assured. He will be immersed in the ocean of pardon and forgiveness and will become the recipient of bounty and favor. Strive thine utmost to give his child a Bahá'í training so that when he attaineth maturity he may be merciful, illumined and heavenly.

Summary:

The passage addresses a seeker of the Kingdom who has experienced the death of their husband. It describes the world as a storehouse of afflictions and suffering, emphasizing the fleeting nature of comfort in this mortal abode. The wise person does not attach themselves to worldly life, understanding its transient nature. The text acknowledges the pressures that can lead individuals to wish for death but assures that the departed husband will be immersed in the ocean of pardon

and forgiveness. There is an exhortation to provide Bahá'í training to the husband's child for a merciful, illumined, and heavenly upbringing.

Key Points:

1. Acknowledgment of Calamity:

- Recognizes the severe calamity the seeker has experienced, the death of their respected husband.

2. Nature of Mortal Life:

- Describes mortal life as a storehouse of afflictions and suffering, emphasizing the transient nature of comfort.

3. Wise Perspective:

- Encourages a wise perspective, where one does not attach themselves to mortal life and does not depend on it.

4. Desire for Death:

- Acknowledges that some, under extreme pressure, may wish for death as an escape from sorrows and afflictions.

5. Assurance for the Departed Husband:

- Assures the seeker that the departed husband will be immersed in the ocean of pardon and forgiveness, receiving bounty and favor.

6. Guidance for the Child:

- Encourages efforts to provide Bahá'í training to the husband's child for a merciful, illumined, and heavenly upbringing.

Questions and Answers:

1. Q: How does the passage describe mortal life?

A: Mortal life is depicted as a storehouse of afflictions and suffering with fleeting moments of comfort.

2. Q: What perspective is encouraged regarding mortal life?

A: The wise perspective is not to attach oneself to mortal life and not to depend on it.

3. Q: What assurance is given regarding the departed husband?

A: The departed husband is assured to be immersed in the ocean of pardon and forgiveness, receiving bounty and favor.

4. Q: Why might some individuals wish for death according to the passage?

A: Under extreme pressure of anguish, some might wish for death as an escape from sorrows and afflictions.

5. Q: What guidance is provided for the child of the departed husband?

A: There is an encouragement to provide Bahá'í training to the child for a merciful, illumined, and heavenly upbringing.

O thou beloved maidservant of God, although the loss of a son is indeed heartbreaking and beyond the limits of human endurance, yet one who knoweth and understandeth is assured that the son hath not been lost but, rather, hath stepped from this world into another, and she will find him in the divine realm. That reunion shall be for eternity, while in this world separation is inevitable and bringeth with it a burning grief.

Praise be unto God that thou hast faith, art turning thy face toward the everlasting Kingdom and believest in the existence of a heavenly world. Therefore be thou not disconsolate, do not languish, do not sigh, neither wail nor weep; for agitation and mourning deeply affect his soul in the divine realm.

That beloved child addresseth thee from the hidden world: “O thou kind Mother, thank divine Providence that I have been freed from a small and gloomy cage and, like the birds of the meadows, have soared to the divine world—a world which is spacious, illumined, and ever gay and jubilant. Therefore, lament not, O Mother, and be not grieved; I am not of the lost, nor have I been obliterated and destroyed. I have shaken off the mortal form and have raised my banner in this spiritual world. Following this separation is everlasting companionship. Thou shalt find me in the heaven of the Lord, immersed in an ocean of light.”

Summary:

The passage consoles a grieving mother, assuring her that her departed son has transitioned to a divine realm. It emphasizes the eternal nature of the reunion and encourages the mother to find

solace in her faith. The departed child reassures the mother, expressing joy in being liberated from the physical world and urging her not to lament.

Key Points:

1. Loss of a son is a deeply painful experience, but understanding reveals it as a transition to a divine realm.
2. The passage encourages the mother to have faith, turn towards the everlasting Kingdom, and believe in a heavenly world.
3. Separation in this world is inevitable, causing grief, but reunion in the divine realm is eternal.
4. The departed child addresses the mother from the hidden world, expressing freedom from a limited existence and soaring to a spacious, illuminated, and joyful divine world.
5. The child reassures the mother, emphasizing that they are not lost or destroyed, having shed the mortal form and entered a spiritual realm, promising everlasting companionship.

Questions and Answers:

1. Q: What perspective does the passage offer on the loss of a loved one?

A: The passage suggests that the loss, though painful, is a transition to a divine realm, ensuring an eternal reunion.

2. Q: How does the passage advise the grieving mother to cope?

A: The mother is advised to have faith, turn towards the everlasting Kingdom, and avoid agitation, mourning, and excessive grief.

3. Q: What characteristics are attributed to the divine world in the passage?

A: The divine world is described as spacious, illumined, and ever gay and jubilant.

4. Q: How does the departed child address the mother from the hidden world?

A: The child expresses gratitude for being freed from a limited existence, comparing it to soaring like birds in the meadows to the divine world.

5. Q: What assurance does the child provide regarding their current state?

A: The child assures the mother that they are not lost or obliterated, having shed the mortal form and raised their banner in the spiritual world, promising everlasting companionship.

– 172 –

Praise be to God, thy heart is engaged in the commemoration of God, thy soul is gladdened by the glad tidings of God and thou art absorbed in prayer. The state of prayer is the best of conditions, for man is then associating with God. Prayer verily bestoweth life, particularly when offered in private and at times, such as midnight, when freed from daily cares.

Summary:

The passage expresses praise for the reader's devotion to the commemoration of God, finding joy in divine glad tidings, and being absorbed in prayer. It asserts that the state of prayer is the most favorable condition, as it represents an association with God. Additionally, it emphasizes that

prayer imparts life, especially when conducted privately and during moments free from daily concerns, such as midnight.

Key Points:

1. Praise is directed towards the reader for being engaged in the commemoration of God, finding joy in divine glad tidings, and being absorbed in prayer.
2. The state of prayer is described as the best condition, highlighting it as a form of association with God.
3. Prayer is acknowledged as a source of life, with particular emphasis on its efficacy when performed privately and during times, like midnight, when one is free from daily cares.

Questions and Answers:

1. Q: What is the reader praised for in the passage?

A: The reader is praised for being engaged in the commemoration of God, finding joy in divine glad tidings, and being absorbed in prayer.

2. Q: How is the state of prayer described in the passage?

A: The state of prayer is described as the best condition, signifying a close association with God.

3. Q: According to the passage, what does prayer bestow?

A: Prayer bestows life, particularly when conducted privately and during times free from daily concerns, as emphasized in the passage.

4. Q: When is prayer considered more effective in the passage?

A: Prayer is considered more effective when offered in private and at specific times, such as midnight, when one is freed from daily cares.

5. Q: What is the significance of the reader being absorbed in prayer, according to the passage?

A: Being absorbed in prayer signifies the reader's association with God and highlights the best condition for communion with the divine, as stated in the passage.

– 173 –

Those souls that, in this day, enter the divine kingdom and attain everlasting life, although materially dwelling on earth, yet in reality soar in the realm of heaven. Their bodies may linger on earth but their spirits travel in the immensity of space. For as thoughts widen and become illumined, they acquire the power of flight and transport man to the kingdom of God.

Summary:

The passage describes souls entering the divine kingdom and attaining everlasting life while still residing on earth. It suggests that although their bodies remain on earth, their spirits transcend to

the heavenly realm. This transcendence is attributed to the expansion and illumination of thoughts, granting the power of flight and transporting individuals to the kingdom of God.

Key Points:

1. Souls entering the divine kingdom and gaining everlasting life are discussed, emphasizing their simultaneous existence on earth and in the heavenly realm.
2. The passage highlights the separation of the physical body on earth from the spirit's journey in the vastness of space.
3. The ability to transcend is linked to the widening and illuminating of thoughts, enabling flight and transportation to the kingdom of God.

Questions and Answers:

1. Q: What is the unique aspect of the souls mentioned in the passage?

A: These souls enter the divine kingdom and attain everlasting life while still residing on earth.

2. Q: How does the passage describe the coexistence of the souls on earth and in the heavenly realm?

A: While their bodies remain on earth, the spirits of these souls soar in the realm of heaven.

3. Q: What is attributed to the power of flight and transportation mentioned in the passage?

A: The power of flight and transportation is linked to the widening and illumination of thoughts.

4. Q: What role do thoughts play in the passage?

A: Thoughts, as they widen and become illumined, acquire the power to transport individuals to the kingdom of God.

5. Q: How does the passage characterize the journey of the spirits in the immensity of space?

A: The spirits, despite their bodies lingering on earth, are described as traveling in the immensity of space, indicating a transcendence beyond physical constraints.

– 174 –

O ye spiritual friends of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá! The letter ye had written hath been noted; its contents were most pleasing and bespoke your firmness and steadfastness in the Cause of God.

That Assembly resteth in the sheltering shade of the Lord of all bounties, and it is my hope that, as beseemeth that body, it will be favored and invigorated by the breathings of the Holy Spirit, and that day by day ye will love God in ever greater measure, and become more tightly bound to the Beauty that abideth forever, to Him Who is the Light of the world. For love of God and spiritual attraction do cleanse and purify the human heart and dress and adorn it with the spotless garment of holiness; and once the heart is entirely attached to the Lord, and bound over to the Blessed Perfection, then will the grace of God be revealed.

This love is not of the body but completely of the soul. And those souls whose inner being is lit by the love of God are even as spreading rays of light, and they shine out like stars of holiness in a pure and crystalline sky. For true love, real love, is the love for God, and this is sanctified beyond the notions and imaginings of men.

Let God’s beloved, each and every one, be the essence of purity, the very life of holiness, so that in every country they may become famed for their sanctity, independence of spirit, and

meekness. Let them be cheered by draughts from the eternal cup of love for God, and make merry as they drink from the wine-vaults of Heaven. Let them behold the Blessed Beauty, and feel the flame and rapture of that meeting, and be struck dumb with awe and wonder. This is the station of the sincere; this is the way of the loyal; this is the brightness that shineth on the faces of those nigh unto God.

Wherefore must the friends of God, with utter sanctity, with one accord, rise up in the spirit, in unity with one another, to such a degree that they will become even as one being and one soul. On such a plane as this, physical bodies play no part, rather doth the spirit take over and rule; and when its power encompasseth all then is spiritual union achieved. Strive ye by day and night to cultivate your unity to the fullest degree. Let your thoughts dwell on your own spiritual development, and close your eyes to the deficiencies of other souls. Act ye in such wise, showing forth pure and goodly deeds, and modesty and humility, that ye will cause others to be awakened.

Never is it the wish of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá to see any being hurt, nor will He make anyone to grieve; for man can receive no greater gift than this, that he rejoice another’s heart. I beg of God that ye will be bringers of joy, even as are the angels in Heaven.

Summary:

The passage, addressed to spiritual friends, commends their firmness in the Cause of God. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá expresses hope for the Assembly to be favored by the Holy Spirit, grow in love for God, and be tightly bound to eternal Beauty. The love advocated is described as purely of the soul, cleansing the heart and adorning it with holiness. True love is defined as love for God, sanctified beyond human notions. Believers are urged to embody purity, independence, and meekness, partaking in the divine love. Spiritual unity is emphasized, where physical bodies play no part, and true unity is achieved through the dominance of the spirit. The passage encourages focusing on

personal spiritual development, showing pure deeds, and fostering humility, with the aim of awakening others and bringing joy.

Key Points:

1. Praise for the spiritual friends' firmness in the Cause of God.
2. Hope for the Assembly's favor and invigoration by the Holy Spirit.
3. Emphasis on growing in love for God and being tightly bound to eternal Beauty.
4. Definition of love as purely of the soul, cleansing and adorning the heart with holiness.
5. Encouragement for believers to embody purity, independence, and meekness, and to cultivate spiritual unity.

Questions and Answers:

1. Q: What is commended in the passage?

A: The passage commends the firmness and steadfastness of the spiritual friends in the Cause of God.

2. Q: What is the hope expressed for the Assembly?

A: The hope is for the Assembly to be favored and invigorated by the breathings of the Holy Spirit.

3. Q: How is love described in the passage?

A: Love is described as not of the body but completely of the soul, cleansing and adorning the heart with holiness.

4. Q: What qualities are believers urged to embody?

A: Believers are urged to embody purity, independence of spirit, and meekness.

5. Q: What is emphasized regarding spiritual unity?

A: Spiritual unity is emphasized to the extent that believers should strive to become like one being and one soul, transcending physical bodies and achieving spiritual union.

– 175 –

Mortal charm shall fade away, roses shall give way to thorns, and beauty and youth shall live their day and be no more. But that which eternally endureth is the Beauty of the True One, for its splendor perisheth not and its glory lasteth forever; its charm is all-powerful and its attraction infinite. Well is it then with that countenance that reflecteth the splendor of the Light of the Beloved One! The Lord be praised, thou hast been illumined with this Light, hast acquired the pearl of true knowledge, and hast spoken the Word of Truth.

Summary:

The passage contrasts mortal charm, fleeting beauty, and temporary youth with the enduring beauty of the True One. While mortal attributes fade, the Beauty of the True One remains eternal,

powerful, and infinitely attractive. The passage expresses praise for the one illuminated by the Light of the Beloved One, having acquired true knowledge and spoken the Word of Truth.

Key Points:

1. Mortal charm, roses, beauty, and youth are described as transient, destined to fade away.
2. The enduring Beauty of the True One is emphasized for its eternal splendor and lasting glory.
3. The charm of the True One is portrayed as all-powerful and infinitely attractive.
4. Praise is directed towards the one reflecting the splendor of the Light of the Beloved One.
5. Acknowledgment is given for the individual's illumination, acquisition of true knowledge, and proclamation of the Word of Truth.

Questions and Answers:

1. Q: What is described as fleeting in the passage?

A: Mortal charm, roses, beauty, and youth are described as transient and destined to fade away.

2. Q: What is emphasized regarding the Beauty of the True One?

A: The Beauty of the True One is emphasized for its eternal nature, lasting glory, all-powerful charm, and infinite attraction.

3. Q: What is the praise directed towards?

A: Praise is directed towards the countenance that reflects the splendor of the Light of the Beloved One.

4. Q: What has the praised individual acquired?

A: The praised individual has acquired the pearl of true knowledge and has been illuminated with the Light of the Beloved One.

5. Q: What enduring qualities are attributed to the Beauty of the True One?

A: The Beauty of the True One is described as having eternal splendor, lasting glory, all-powerful charm, and infinite attraction.

– 176 –

O thou who art attracted to the Kingdom of God! Every soul seeketh an object and cherisheth a desire, and day and night striveth to attain his aim. One craveth riches, another thirsteth for glory and still another yearneth for fame, for art, for prosperity and the like. Yet finally all are doomed to loss and disappointment. One and all they leave behind them all that is theirs and empty-handed hasten to the realm beyond, and all their labors shall be in vain. To dust they shall all return, denuded, depressed, disheartened and in utter despair.

But, praised be the Lord, thou art engaged in that which secureth for thee a gain that shall eternally endure; and that is naught but thine attraction to the Kingdom of God, thy faith, and thy knowledge, the enlightenment of thine heart, and thine earnest endeavor to promote the Divine Teachings.

Verily this gift is imperishable and this wealth is a treasure from on high!

Summary:

The passage addresses an individual attracted to the Kingdom of God, highlighting the transience of worldly pursuits and desires. While others strive for riches, glory, fame, and prosperity, these pursuits ultimately lead to loss and disappointment. The addressed person, however, is praised for engaging in endeavors that secure an imperishable gain: attraction to the Kingdom of God, faith, knowledge, heart enlightenment, and earnest promotion of Divine Teachings. This spiritual wealth is acknowledged as a treasure from on high.

Key Points:

1. People relentlessly pursue various worldly desires, such as riches, glory, fame, and prosperity.
2. Despite these pursuits, everyone is destined for loss, disappointment, and eventual departure to the realm beyond.
3. The addressed individual is commended for their engagement in pursuits related to the Kingdom of God, faith, knowledge, heart enlightenment, and the promotion of Divine Teachings.
4. The imperishable nature of the gain from spiritual endeavors is emphasized.
5. The spiritual wealth gained through attraction to the Kingdom of God is recognized as a treasure from on high.

Questions and Answers:

1. Q: What do people strive for in their pursuits, according to the passage?
A: People strive for various worldly desires such as riches, glory, fame, and prosperity.
2. Q: What is the ultimate fate of individuals who pursue worldly desires?
A: Despite worldly pursuits, individuals are destined for loss, disappointment, and departure to the realm beyond.
3. Q: What is the praised individual engaged in, according to the passage?
A: The praised individual is engaged in pursuits related to the Kingdom of God, faith, knowledge, heart enlightenment, and the promotion of Divine Teachings.
4. Q: What is emphasized regarding the gain from spiritual endeavors?
A: The gain from spiritual endeavors is emphasized to be imperishable.
5. Q: How is the spiritual wealth gained by the praised individual described?
A: The spiritual wealth gained through attraction to the Kingdom of God is recognized as a treasure from on high.

O living flame of heavenly love! Thine heart hath been so fired with the love of God that from ten thousand leagues afar its warmth and radiance may be felt and seen. The fire lit by mortal hand imparteth light and warmth to but a little space, whereas that sacred flame which the Hand of God hath kindled, though burning in the east, will set aflame the west and give warmth to both the north and the south; nay, it shall rise from this world to glow with the hottest flame in the realms on high, flooding with light the Kingdom of eternal glory.

Happy art thou to have obtained so heavenly a gift. Blessed art thou to be favored with His divine bestowals.

The glory of God rest upon thee and upon them that hold fast unto the sure handle of His Will and holy Covenant.

Summary:

The passage celebrates the intense love of God within the addressed person, likening it to a living flame with far-reaching warmth and radiance. It contrasts mortal-lit fires, limited in scope, with the divine flame kindled by the Hand of God, capable of spreading across the world and ascending to realms on high. The addressed individual is acknowledged as fortunate for possessing this

heavenly gift and blessed for receiving divine bestowals. A prayer is offered for the glory of God to rest upon the addressed person and those steadfast in holding onto His Will and holy Covenant.

Key Points:

1. The love of God within the addressed person is likened to a living flame with extensive warmth and radiance.
2. Mortal-lit fires have limited impact, whereas the divine flame kindled by the Hand of God can spread globally and ascend to realms on high.
3. The addressed person is deemed fortunate for possessing this heavenly gift.
4. Blessings are extended to the addressed individual for being favored with divine bestowals.
5. A prayer is expressed for the glory of God to rest upon the addressed person and those steadfast in holding onto His Will and holy Covenant.

Questions and Answers:

1. Q: How is the love of God within the addressed person described?

A: The love of God within the addressed person is described as a living flame with extensive warmth and radiance.

2. Q: What is the difference between mortal-lit fires and the divine flame kindled by the Hand of God?

A: Mortal-lit fires have limited impact, while the divine flame can spread globally and ascend to realms on high.

3. Q: What is the addressed person acknowledged as in the passage?

A: The addressed person is acknowledged as fortunate for possessing a heavenly gift and blessed for receiving divine bestowals.

4. Q: What is the prayer expressed in the passage?

A: The prayer is for the glory of God to rest upon the addressed person and those steadfast in holding onto His Will and holy Covenant.

5. Q: How is the divine flame expected to impact the realms on high?

A: The divine flame kindled by the Hand of God is expected to rise from this world and glow with the hottest flame in the realms on high, flooding the Kingdom of eternal glory with light.

– 178 –

O maidservant of God! Thy letter dated 9 December 1918 was received. Its contents were noted. Never lose thy trust in God. Be thou ever hopeful, for the bounties of God never cease to flow upon man. If viewed from one perspective they seem to decrease, but from another they are full and complete. Man is under all conditions immersed in a sea of God's blessings. Therefore, be thou not hopeless under any circumstances, but rather be firm in thy hope.

Attendance at the gatherings of the friends is specifically to keep them alert, vigilant, loving and attracted to the divine Kingdom.

If thou hast a full and eager desire to travel to Phillsburg, Montana, thou art permitted, perchance thou mayest be able to ignite a candle amid that group of miners and may make them

awake and vigilant so that they may turn to God and may acquire a share from the Bounty of the divine Kingdom.

Summary:

The passage responds to a letter dated December 9, 1918, encouraging the recipient, a maidservant of God, to maintain trust and hope in God. It emphasizes that divine bounties continually flow, even if they may seem to decrease from one perspective. The instruction is to remain firm in hope, as man is always immersed in a sea of God's blessings. The gatherings of friends are intended to keep them alert, vigilant, loving, and attracted to the divine Kingdom. The maidservant is granted permission to travel to Phillsburg, Montana, with the hope of igniting spiritual awakening among miners and leading them to turn to God and partake in the divine Bounty.

Key Points:

1. Encouragement to the maidservant to maintain trust and hope in God.
2. Assurance that divine bounties continually flow, despite seeming fluctuations.
3. Instruction to remain firm in hope, recognizing that man is always immersed in God's blessings.
4. Purpose of attending gatherings: to keep friends alert, vigilant, loving, and attracted to the divine Kingdom.
5. Permission for the maidservant to travel to Phillsburg, Montana, with the hope of sparking spiritual awakening among miners.

Questions and Answers:

1. Q: What is the maidservant encouraged to maintain in the passage?

A: The maidservant is encouraged to maintain trust and hope in God.

2. Q: How are divine bounties described in the passage?

A: Divine bounties are described as continually flowing, even if they may seem to decrease from one perspective.

3. Q: What is the recommended attitude under all circumstances?

A: The recommended attitude is to be firm in hope, recognizing that man is always immersed in a sea of God's blessings.

4. Q: What is the purpose of attending gatherings, according to the passage?

A: The purpose of attending gatherings is to keep friends alert, vigilant, loving, and attracted to the divine Kingdom.

5. Q: What permission is granted to the maidservant in the passage?

A: The maidservant is granted permission to travel to Phillsburg, Montana, with the hope of sparking spiritual awakening among miners and leading them to turn to God.

Strive as much as ye can to turn wholly toward the Kingdom, that ye may acquire innate courage and ideal power.

Summary:

The passage encourages individuals to exert maximum effort in directing themselves entirely toward the Kingdom, aiming to attain innate courage and ideal power.

Key Points:

1. Exhortation to strive as much as possible.
2. Emphasis on turning wholly toward the Kingdom.
3. The intended outcome is the acquisition of innate courage and ideal power.

Questions and Answers:

1. Q: What is the primary exhortation in the passage?

A: The primary exhortation is to strive as much as possible.

2. Q: What is the specific direction individuals are encouraged to focus on?

A: Individuals are encouraged to turn wholly toward the Kingdom.

3. Q: What is the desired outcome of turning toward the Kingdom?

A: The desired outcome is the acquisition of innate courage and ideal power.

– 180 –

I hope that in this nether world thou shalt attain unto heavenly light, thou wilt free the souls from the gloom of nature, which is the animal kingdom, and cause them to reach lofty stations in the human kingdom. Today all people are immersed in the world of nature. That is why thou dost see jealousy, greed, the struggle for survival, deception, hypocrisy, tyranny, oppression, disputes, strife, bloodshed, looting and pillaging, which all emanate from the world of nature. Few are those who have been freed from this darkness, who have ascended from the world of nature to the world of man, who have followed the divine Teachings, have served the world of humanity, are resplendent, merciful, illumined and like unto a rose garden. Strive thine utmost to become godlike, characterized with His attributes, illumined and merciful, that thou mayest be freed from every bond and become attached at heart to the Kingdom of the incomparable Lord. This is Bahá'í bounty, and this is heavenly light.

Summary:

The passage expresses hope that the reader will attain heavenly light in this earthly realm. It encourages the liberation of souls from the darkness of nature, symbolized by the animal kingdom, and the elevation of humanity to higher stations. It highlights the pervasive influence of nature, manifesting as negative traits in human behavior. The aspiration is for individuals to transcend the

limitations of nature, follow divine Teachings, and become godlike, characterized by attributes such as illumination and mercy, ultimately being attached to the Kingdom of God.

Key Points:

1. Hope for the reader to attain heavenly light in the earthly realm.
2. Encouragement to liberate souls from the darkness of nature.
3. The prevalence of negative traits in humanity originating from the world of nature.
4. Aspiration for individuals to transcend nature, follow divine Teachings, and become godlike.
5. The ultimate goal is to be attached to the Kingdom of the incomparable Lord.

Questions and Answers:

1. Q: What is the expressed hope in the passage?

A: The hope is that the reader will attain heavenly light in this earthly realm.

2. Q: What does the passage encourage regarding the souls?

A: The passage encourages the liberation of souls from the darkness of nature.

3. Q: What negative traits in humanity are attributed to the world of nature?

A: Negative traits such as jealousy, greed, deception, and bloodshed are attributed to the world of nature.

4. Q: What attributes are individuals encouraged to embody?

A: Individuals are encouraged to become godlike, characterized by attributes such as illumination and mercy.

5. Q: What is the ultimate goal mentioned in the passage?

A: The ultimate goal is for individuals to be freed from every bond and become attached at heart to the Kingdom of the incomparable Lord.

— 181 —

Regarding the statement in *The Hidden Words*, that man must renounce his own self, the meaning is that he must renounce his inordinate desires, his selfish purposes and the promptings of his human self, and seek out the holy breathings of the spirit, and follow the yearnings of his higher self, and immerse himself in the sea of sacrifice, with his heart fixed upon the beauty of the All-Glorious.

As for the reference in *The Hidden Words* regarding the Covenant entered into on Mount Páran, this signifieth that in the sight of God the past, the present and the future are all one and the same—whereas, relative to man, the past is gone and forgotten, the present is fleeting, and the future is within the realm of hope. And it is a basic principle of the Law of God that in every Prophetic Mission, He entereth into a Covenant with all believers—a Covenant that endureth until the end of that Mission, until the promised day when the Personage stipulated at the outset of the Mission is made manifest. Consider Moses, He Who conversed with God. Verily, upon Mount Sinai, Moses entered into a Covenant regarding the Messiah, with all those souls who would live in the day of the Messiah. And those souls, although they appeared many centuries after Moses, were nevertheless—so far as the Covenant, which is outside time, was concerned—present there with

Moses. The Jews, however, were heedless of this and remembered it not, and thus they suffered a great and clear loss.

As to the reference in the Arabic Hidden Words that the human being must become detached from self, here too the meaning is that he should not seek out anything whatever for his own self in this swiftly passing life, but that he should cut the self away, that is, he should yield up the self and all its concerns on the field of martyrdom, at the time of the coming of the Lord.

Summary:

The passage interprets statements from The Hidden Words. It explains that when The Hidden Words speaks of renouncing oneself, it refers to letting go of inordinate desires and selfish purposes, seeking spiritual guidance, and immersing in sacrifice with focus on the beauty of the All-Glorious. Regarding the Covenant on Mount Páran, it signifies God's timeless perspective, where past, present, and future are one. God establishes a Covenant in each Prophetic Mission, linking believers across time. Moses, for example, entered into a Covenant about the Messiah, with souls present in the future. The passage also clarifies that detachment from self in the Arabic

Hidden Words means not seeking personal gains in this transient life but surrendering oneself, especially during the advent of the Lord.

Key Points:

1. The meaning of renouncing oneself is explained as letting go of inordinate desires and selfish purposes.
2. Seeking spiritual guidance and immersing in sacrifice with a focus on the beauty of the All-Glorious is emphasized.
3. The Covenant on Mount Párán is described as reflecting God's timeless perspective, connecting believers across time.
4. God establishes a Covenant in each Prophetic Mission, linking believers to the promises made at the outset of the Mission.
5. Detachment from self in the Arabic Hidden Words is clarified as surrendering oneself, especially during the advent of the Lord.

Questions and Answers:

1. Q: What does The Hidden Words mean by "renounce his own self"?
A: It means letting go of inordinate desires, selfish purposes, and following the yearnings of the higher self, immersing in the sea of sacrifice with a focus on the beauty of the All-Glorious.
2. Q: What does the Covenant on Mount Párán signify?
A: It signifies God's timeless perspective, where past, present, and future are one, and a Covenant is established in each Prophetic Mission, linking believers across time.
3. Q: How did Moses enter into a Covenant regarding the Messiah?
A: Upon Mount Sinai, Moses entered into a Covenant regarding the Messiah with souls who would live in the day of the Messiah, linking them across time.
4. Q: What is the principle of the Law of God regarding Prophetic Missions?
A: In every Prophetic Mission, God enters into a Covenant with all believers, lasting until the end of that Mission.
5. Q: How is detachment from self explained in the Arabic Hidden Words?
A: It means not seeking personal gains in this transient life but surrendering oneself, especially during the advent of the Lord.

– 182 –

O ye who are holding fast unto the Covenant and Testament! This day, from the realms of the All-Glorious, from the Kingdom of Holiness where hosannas of glorification and praise rise up, the Company on high direct their gaze upon you. Whensoever their gaze lighteth upon gatherings of those who are steadfast in the Covenant and Testament, then do they utter their cry, "Glad tidings! Glad tidings!" Then, exulting, do they lift up their voices, and shout, "O ye spiritual communion! O ye gathering of God! Blessed are ye! Glad tidings be unto you! Bright be your faces, and be ye of good cheer, for ye cling to the Covenant of the Beloved of all the worlds, ye are on fire with the wine of His Testament. Ye have plighted your troth to the Ancient of Days, ye have drunk deep from the chalice of loyalty. Ye have guarded and defended the Cause of God; ye have not been a

cause of dividing up His Word; ye have not brought His Faith low, but have striven to glorify His Holy Name; ye have not allowed the Blessed Cause to be exposed to the derision of the people. Ye have not permitted the Designated Station to be humbled, nor been willing to see the Center of Authority discredited or exposed to mockery and persecution. Ye have striven to keep the Word whole and one. Ye have passed through the portals of mercy. Ye have not let the Blessed Beauty slip from your minds, to fade unremembered.”

The Glory rest upon you.

Summary:

The passage addresses those steadfast in the Covenant and Testament, conveying a message from the realms of the All-Glorious. The Company on high expresses joy and praises gatherings of the faithful, declaring "Glad tidings!" and commending their loyalty to the Covenant. The believers are celebrated for their commitment to the Ancient of Days, their adherence to His Testament, and their defense of the Cause of God. The passage acknowledges their efforts to preserve unity,

protect the Faith, and uphold the dignity of the Designated Station. The Company on high bestows blessings, and the Glory is invoked upon the steadfast believers.

Key Points:

1. Address to those holding fast unto the Covenant and Testament.
2. The Company on high expresses joy and praises gatherings of the faithful.
3. Glad tidings are declared for those clinging to the Covenant and Testament.
4. Commendation for loyalty to the Ancient of Days and adherence to His Testament.
5. Acknowledgment of efforts to preserve unity, protect the Faith, and uphold the dignity of the Designated Station.
6. Blessings are bestowed, and the Glory is invoked upon the steadfast believers.

Questions and Answers:

1. Q: Who is the passage addressing?

A: The passage is addressing those who are holding fast unto the Covenant and Testament.

2. Q: What expression is used by the Company on high upon seeing gatherings of the steadfast?

A: The Company on high utters the cry, "Glad tidings! Glad tidings!"

3. Q: What are the believers commended for in the passage?

A: The believers are commended for their loyalty to the Ancient of Days, adherence to His Testament, and defense of the Cause of God.

4. Q: What efforts of the believers are acknowledged in the passage?

A: The believers' efforts to preserve unity, protect the Faith, and uphold the dignity of the Designated Station are acknowledged.

5. Q: What blessing is invoked upon the steadfast believers?

A: The Glory is invoked upon the steadfast believers, and they are wished bright faces and good cheer.

– 183 –

O thou daughter of the Kingdom! Thy letter was received. It was like the melody of the divine nightingale, whose song delighteth the hearts. This is because its contents indicated faith, assurance and firmness in the Covenant and the Testament. Today the dynamic power of the world of existence is the power of the Covenant which like unto an artery pulsateth in the body of the contingent world and protecteth Bahá'í unity.

The Bahá'ís are commanded to establish the oneness of mankind; if they cannot unite around one point how will they be able to bring about the unity of mankind?

The purpose of the Blessed Beauty in entering into this Covenant and Testament was to gather all existent beings around one point so that the thoughtless souls, who in every cycle and generation have been the cause of dissension, may not undermine the Cause. He hath, therefore, commanded that whatever emanateth from the Center of the Covenant is right and is under His protection and favor, while all else is error.

Praise be to God, thou art firm in the Covenant and the Testament.

Summary:

The passage responds to a letter, praising it for its faith, assurance, and firmness in the Covenant and the Testament. It emphasizes the dynamic power of the Covenant in maintaining Bahá'í unity, comparing it to an artery pulsating in the body of the contingent world. The Bahá'ís are instructed to establish the oneness of mankind and reminded that unity around one point is crucial for this purpose. The Covenant and Testament serve to gather all beings around one point, protecting the Cause from dissension caused by thoughtless souls. The passage concludes by expressing gratitude for the recipient's firmness in the Covenant and the Testament.

Key Points:

1. Praise for the recipient's letter, likening it to the melody of the divine nightingale.
2. Emphasis on faith, assurance, and firmness in the Covenant and the Testament.
3. The Covenant is described as the dynamic power protecting Bahá'í unity.
4. Instruction for Bahá'ís to establish the oneness of mankind.
5. The Covenant and Testament aim to gather all beings around one point, preventing dissension caused by thoughtless souls.
6. Recognition and gratitude for the recipient's firmness in the Covenant and the Testament.

Questions and Answers:

1. Q: How is the recipient's letter described in the passage?
A: The recipient's letter is described as the melody of the divine nightingale, delighting the hearts.
2. Q: What is emphasized regarding the Covenant's role in Bahá'í unity?
A: The Covenant is described as the dynamic power protecting Bahá'í unity, likened to an artery pulsating in the body of the contingent world.
3. Q: What instruction is given to Bahá'ís in the passage?
A: Bahá'ís are instructed to establish the oneness of mankind.
4. Q: What purpose is attributed to the Covenant and Testament?
A: The purpose of the Covenant and Testament is to gather all beings around one point, preventing dissension caused by thoughtless souls.
5. Q: How does the passage conclude regarding the recipient?
A: The passage concludes by expressing gratitude, affirming that the recipient is firm in the Covenant and the Testament.

– 184 –

O ye blessed souls! Although ye are undergoing crucial tests in view of the repeated and assiduous attempts of some people to shake the faith of the friends in Los Angeles, yet ye are under the guarding eye of the bounty of Bahá'u'lláh and are assisted by legions of angels.

Walk, therefore, with a sure step and engage with the utmost assurance and confidence in the promulgation of the divine fragrances, the glorification of the Word of God and firmness in the Covenant. Rest ye assured that if a soul ariseth in the utmost perseverance and raiseth the Call of the Kingdom and resolutely promulgateth the Covenant, be he an insignificant ant he shall be

enabled to drive away the formidable elephant from the arena, and if he be a feeble moth he shall cut to pieces the plumage of the rapacious vulture.

Endeavor, therefore, that ye may scatter and disperse the army of doubt and of error with the power of the holy utterances. This is my exhortation and this is my counsel. Do not quarrel with anybody, and shun every form of dispute. Utter the Word of God. If he accepteth it, the desired purpose is attained, and if he turneth away leave him to himself and trust to God.

Such is the attribute of those who are firm in the Covenant.

****Summary:****

The passage addresses individuals in Los Angeles, acknowledging the tests they face from attempts to shake their faith. It assures them of Bahá'u'lláh's guarding eye and assistance from legions of angels. The believers are encouraged to walk with sure steps, engage confidently in promoting divine teachings, glorify the Word of God, and remain firm in the Covenant. The metaphorical power of perseverance in promoting the Covenant is likened to an insignificant ant driving away a formidable elephant or a feeble moth defeating a rapacious vulture. The believers

are urged to scatter the army of doubt with the power of holy utterances and advised against quarreling or disputing. The attribute of those firm in the Covenant is highlighted.

Key Points:

1. Acknowledgment of tests faced by believers in Los Angeles.
2. Assurance of the guarding eye of Bahá'u'lláh and assistance from legions of angels.
3. Encouragement to walk with sure steps and engage confidently in promoting divine teachings.
4. Metaphorical illustration of the power of perseverance in promoting the Covenant.
5. Urging believers to scatter the army of doubt with the power of holy utterances.
6. Advice against quarreling or disputing, emphasizing the attribute of firmness in the Covenant.

Questions and Answers:

1. Q: What assurance is given to the believers in Los Angeles?

A: The believers in Los Angeles are assured of Bahá'u'lláh's guarding eye and assistance from legions of angels.

2. Q: What metaphorical illustration is used to depict the power of perseverance in promoting the Covenant?

A: The power of perseverance in promoting the Covenant is likened to an insignificant ant driving away a formidable elephant or a feeble moth defeating a rapacious vulture.

3. Q: What are believers encouraged to do in the passage?

A: Believers are encouraged to walk with sure steps, engage confidently in promoting divine teachings, and remain firm in the Covenant.

4. Q: How are believers advised to handle those who turn away from the Word of God?

A: Believers are advised to leave those who turn away to themselves and trust in God.

5. Q: What attribute is highlighted in the passage regarding those firm in the Covenant?

A: The passage highlights the attribute of those who are firm in the Covenant, emphasizing their perseverance and reliance on the power of holy utterances.

– 185 –

O ye friends and maidservants of the Merciful! From the Spiritual Assembly of Los Angeles a letter hath been received. It was indicative of the fact that the blessed souls in California, like unto an immovable mountain, are withstanding the gale of violation, have, like unto blessed trees, been planted in the soil of the Covenant and are most firm and steadfast. The hope is entertained, therefore, that through the blessings of the Sun of Truth they may daily increase in their firmness and steadfastness. The tests of every dispensation are in direct proportion to the greatness of the Cause, and as heretofore such a manifest Covenant, written by the Supreme Pen, hath not been entered upon, the tests are proportionately more severe. These trials cause the feeble souls to waver while those who are firm are not affected. These agitations of the violators are no more than the foam of the ocean, which is one of its inseparable features; but the ocean of the Covenant shall surge and shall cast ashore the bodies of the dead, for it cannot retain them. Thus it is seen that the ocean of the Covenant hath surged and surged until it hath thrown out the dead bodies—souls that are deprived of the Spirit of God and are lost in passion and self and are seeking leadership. This

foam of the ocean shall not endure and shall soon disperse and vanish, while the ocean of the Covenant shall eternally surge and roar....

From the early days of creation down to the present time, throughout all the divine dispensations, such a firm and explicit Covenant hath not been entered upon. In view of this fact is it possible for this foam to remain on the surface of the ocean of the Covenant? No, by God! The violators are trampling upon their own dignity, are uprooting their own foundations and are proud at being upheld by flatterers who exert a great effort to shake the faith of feeble souls. But this action of theirs is of no consequence; it is a mirage and not water, foam and not the sea, mist and not a cloud, illusion and not reality. All this ye shall soon see.

Praise be to God, ye are firm and steadfast; be ye thankful that like unto blessed trees ye are firmly planted in the soil of the Covenant. It is sure that every firm one will grow, will yield new fruits and will increase daily in freshness and grace. Reflect upon all the writings of Bahá'u'lláh, whether epistles or prayers, and ye shall surely come across a thousand passages wherein Bahá'u'lláh prays: "O God! Bring to naught the violators of the Covenant and defeat the oppressors of the Testament." "He who denieth the Covenant and the Testament is rejected by God, and he who remaineth firm and steadfast therein is favored at the Threshold of Oneness." Such sayings and prayers abound, refer to them and ye shall know.

Never be depressed. The more ye are stirred by violation, the more deepen ye in firmness and steadfastness, and be assured that the divine hosts shall conquer, for they are assured of the victory of the Abhá Kingdom. Throughout all regions the standard of firmness and steadfastness is upraised and the flag of violation is debased, for only a few weak souls have been led away by the flattery and the specious arguments of the violators who are outwardly with the greatest care exhibiting firmness but inwardly are engaged in agitating souls. Only a few who are the leaders of those who stir and agitate are outwardly known as violators while the rest, through subtle means, deceive the souls, for outwardly they assert their firmness and steadfastness in the Covenant but when they come across responsive ears they secretly sow the seeds of suspicion. The case of all of them resembleth the violation of the Covenant by Judas Iscariot and his followers. Consider: hath any result or trace remained after them? Not even a name hath been left by his followers and although a number of Jews sided with him it was as if he had no followers at all. This Judas Iscariot who was the leader of the apostles betrayed Christ for thirty pieces of silver. Take heed, O ye people of perception!

At this time these insignificant violators will surely betray the Center of the Covenant for the large sum which by every subtle means they have begged. It is now thirty years since Bahá'u'lláh ascended, and in that time these violators have striven with might and main. What have they achieved? Under all conditions those who have remained firm in the Covenant have conquered, while the violators have met defeat, disappointment and dejection. After the ascension of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, no trace of them shall remain. These souls are ignorant of what will happen and are proud of their own fancies.

In short, O ye friends of God and maidservants of the Merciful! The hand of divine bounty hath placed upon your heads a jewelled crown, the precious gems of which shall shine eternally over all regions. Appreciate this bounty, loose your tongues in praise and thanksgiving, and engage in the promulgation of the divine teachings, for this is the spirit of life and the means of salvation.

Summary:

The letter from the Spiritual Assembly of Los Angeles expresses gratitude for the steadfastness of believers in California. The believers are compared to an immovable mountain and blessed trees,

firmly rooted in the Covenant. The tests faced are deemed severe due to the unprecedented and explicit Covenant written by the Supreme Pen. Violators are likened to foam on the ocean, temporary and destined to disperse, while the ocean of the Covenant remains eternal and powerful.

The text emphasizes the importance of firmness, reflects on Bahá'u'lláh's prayers against violators, warns against subtle agitators, and predicts the eventual defeat of insignificant violators.

Key Points:

1. Introduction

- Receipt of a letter from the Spiritual Assembly of Los Angeles.
- Believers in California compared to an immovable mountain and blessed trees.
- Hope for increased firmness through the blessings of the Sun of Truth.

2. Nature of Tests

- Tests are in proportion to the greatness of the Cause.
- Severe tests due to the explicit Covenant written by the Supreme Pen.
- Trials affect feeble souls but not those who are firm.

3. Analogy of the Ocean and Covenant

- Violators likened to foam on the ocean, temporary and destined to disperse.
- The Covenant depicted as an eternal and powerful ocean casting ashore the bodies of the spiritually dead.

4. Bahá'u'lláh's Writings and Prayers

- Reflection on Bahá'u'lláh's writings, including prayers against violators.
- Emphasis on the rejection of deniers and favor for those remaining steadfast in the Covenant.

5. Encouragement for Believers

- Appreciation for the firmness and steadfastness of the believers.
- Assurance that every firm believer will grow, yield new fruits, and increase in freshness and grace.

6. Response to Violation and Agitation

- Advice to believers never to be depressed.
- Encouragement to deepen in firmness and steadfastness.
- Confidence in the victory of the divine hosts.

7. Warning against Subtle Violators

- Description of violators exhibiting outward firmness but agitating souls through subtle means.
- Comparison to the violation of the Covenant by Judas Iscariot and his followers.

8. Prediction for Insignificant Violators

- Prediction that insignificant violators will betray the Center of the Covenant for personal gain.
- Assertion that after thirty years, violators will have achieved nothing, and no trace of them will remain after 'Abdu'l-Bahá's ascension.

9. Closing Message

- Appreciation for the divine bounty placed upon believers.
- Call to praise and thanksgiving.

- Encouragement to engage in the promulgation of divine teachings for salvation.

Questions and Answers:

1. What is the significance of the believers in California being compared to an immovable mountain and blessed trees?
 - This comparison highlights their steadfastness and resilience in the face of challenges, akin to natural elements firmly rooted in the Covenant.
2. How does the text describe the nature of the tests faced by believers?
 - The tests are severe, directly proportional to the greatness of the Cause, and intensified due to the explicit Covenant, making them like foam on the ocean, temporary and destined to disperse.
3. What role do prayers play in the believers' response to violators of the Covenant?
 - The writings of Bahá'u'lláh include numerous prayers calling for the nullification of Covenant violators, emphasizing the rejection of deniers and favoring those who remain steadfast.
4. How are believers advised to respond to the challenges posed by violators and agitators?
 - Believers are encouraged never to be depressed, to deepen in firmness and steadfastness, and to be confident in the ultimate victory of the divine hosts.
5. What is the predicted fate of the violators, particularly the insignificant ones, in the text?
 - The insignificant violators are predicted to betray the Center of the Covenant for personal gain, and after striving for thirty years, they will achieve nothing, with no trace of them remaining after 'Abdu'l-Bahá's ascension.

– 186 –

O thou who art firm in the Covenant! Three consecutive letters have been received from thee. From their contents it became known that in Cleveland the hearts are afflicted by the murky breaths of the Covenant-breakers and harmony hath decreased among the friends. Gracious God! A hundred times it hath been foretold that the violators are lying in ambush and by every means desire to cause dissension among the friends so that this dissension may end in violation of the Covenant. How is it that, notwithstanding this warning, the friends have neglected this explicit statement?

The point at issue is clear, direct and of utmost brevity. Either Bahá'u'lláh was wise, omniscient and aware of what would ensue, or was ignorant and in error. He entered, by His supreme pen, into such a firm Covenant and Testament with all the Bahá'ís, first with the Aghṣán, the Afnán and His kindred, and commanded them to obey and turn toward Him. By His supreme pen He hath explicitly declared that the object of the following verse of the *Kitáb-i-Aqdas* is the Most Great Branch:

“When the ocean of My presence hath ebbed and the Book of My Revelation is ended, turn your faces toward Him Whom God hath purposed, Who hath branched from this Ancient Root.” Its meaning briefly is this: that after My ascension it is incumbent upon the Aghṣán, the Afnán and the kindred, and all the friends of God, to turn their faces to Him Who hath branched from the Ancient Root.

He also plainly saith in the *Kitáb-i-Aqdas*: “O ye people of the world! When the Mystic Dove will have winged its flight from its Sanctuary of Praise and sought its far-off goal, its hidden habitation, refer ye whatsoever ye understand not in the Book to Him Who hath branched from this mighty Stock.” Addressing all the people of the world He saith: When the Mystic Dove flieth away from the orchard of praise to the Most Supreme and Invisible Station—that is, when the Blessed Beauty turneth away from the contingent world towards the invisible realm—refer whatever ye do not understand in the Book to Him Who hath branched from the Ancient Root. That is, whatever He saith is the very truth.

And in the Book of the Covenant He explicitly saith that the object of this verse “Who hath branched from this Ancient Root” is the Most Mighty Branch. And He commandeth all the Aghṣán, the Afnán, the kindred and the Bahá’ís to turn toward Him. Now, either one must say that the Blessed Beauty hath made a mistake, or He must be obeyed. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá hath no command for the people to obey save the diffusion of the fragrances of God, the exaltation of His Word, the promulgation of the oneness of the world of humanity, the establishment of universal peace, and other of the commands of God. These are divine commands and have nothing to do with ‘Abdu’l-Bahá. Whoever wisheth may accept them, and anyone who rejecteth them may do as he pleaseth.

Now some of the mischief-makers, with many stratagems, are seeking leadership, and in order to reach this position they instil doubts among the friends that they may cause differences, and that these differences may result in their drawing a party to themselves. But the friends of God must be awake and must know that the scattering of these doubts hath as its motive personal desires and the achievement of leadership.

Do not disrupt Bahá’í unity, and know that this unity cannot be maintained save through faith in the Covenant of God.

Thou hast the desire to travel that thou mayest spread the fragrances of God. This is highly suitable. Assuredly divine confirmations will assist thee and the power of the Covenant and Testament will secure for thee triumph and victory.

Summary:

The letter addresses concerns of Covenant-breaking causing discord in Cleveland. It emphasizes the clarity of Bahá’u’lláh’s Covenant, particularly regarding the succession after His passing. The letter underlines the significance of obedience to the Covenant and the danger of violators seeking leadership through instigating doubts. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s commands focus on the diffusion of God’s fragrances and the promotion of universal peace. The unity of the Bahá’í community is

highlighted, emphasizing that disruptions arise from personal desires, and the power of the Covenant ensures triumph.

Key Points:

1. Covenant-Breakers and Discord:

- Covenant-breakers are causing strife in Cleveland.
- The warning about their influence was foretold, yet the friends seem to have neglected it.

2. Clarity of Bahá'u'lláh's Covenant:

- The Covenant is described as clear, direct, and concise.
- Bahá'u'lláh's wisdom is contrasted with the potential for ignorance or error.

3. Succession and Turn Towards the Most Great Branch:

- The Aghsán, Afnán, and kindred are commanded to turn towards the Most Great Branch.
- Explicit statements in the Kitáb-i-Aqdas and the Book of the Covenant support this direction.

4. 'Abdu'l-Bahá's Commands:

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá has no personal commands but emphasizes the divine commands.
- His directives focus on diffusing the fragrances of God, promoting oneness, and establishing peace.

5. Dangers of Doubts and Striving for Leadership:

- Mischief-makers are instilling doubts among the friends to gain leadership.
- The scattering of doubts is driven by personal desires.

6. Maintaining Bahá'í Unity:

- Unity is emphasized as crucial, maintained through faith in the Covenant of God.

7. Encouragement for Travel and Spreading the Faith:

- The recipient is encouraged to travel to spread the fragrances of God.
- Divine confirmations and the power of the Covenant are assured for triumph and victory.

Questions and Answers:

1. What is the primary concern addressed in the letter regarding the Bahá'í community in Cleveland?

- The letter addresses the affliction caused by Covenant-breakers and the decrease in harmony among the friends in Cleveland.

2. What is the central point of contention regarding Bahá'u'lláh's Covenant?

- The central point of contention is whether Bahá'u'lláh was wise, omniscient, and aware of the consequences of His Covenant, or if He was ignorant and in error.

3. What are the commands given by 'Abdu'l-Bahá, and how do they differ from personal desires?

- ‘Abdu’l-Bahá's commands focus on diffusing God's fragrances, promoting oneness, and establishing peace. Personal desires are depicted as seeking leadership and causing doubts among the friends.

4. Why is the scattering of doubts considered dangerous, according to the letter?

- The scattering of doubts is seen as motivated by personal desires, particularly the ambition for leadership, which poses a threat to the unity of the Bahá’í community.

5. What encouragement does the recipient receive regarding their desire to travel and spread the faith?

- The recipient is highly encouraged to travel, with the assurance that divine confirmations and the power of the Covenant will secure triumph and victory in spreading the fragrances of God.

– 187 –

O thou who art firm in the Covenant! Thy letter was received. Thou hast expressed satisfaction with the Convention, that this gathering hath been the means of the elevation of the Cause of God and the demonstration of the power of His Word. The greatness of the Cause will clear away these differences and may be compared to health in the body of man which, when established, cureth all disease and weakness. Our hope is that no trace of opposition may remain; but some of the friends in America are restless in their fresh ambitions and strive and seek under the ground and in the air to discover anything that breedeth dissension.

Praise be to God, all such doors are closed in the Cause of Bahá’u’lláh for a special authoritative Center hath been appointed—a Center that solveth all difficulties and wardeth off all differences. The Universal House of Justice, likewise, wardeth off all differences and whatever it prescribeth must be accepted and he who transgresseth is rejected. But this Universal House of Justice which is the Legislature hath not yet been instituted.

Thus it is seen that no means for dissension hath been left, but carnal desires are the cause of difference as it is the case with the violators. These do not doubt the validity of the Covenant but selfish motives have dragged them to this condition. It is not that they do not know what they do—they are perfectly aware and still they exhibit opposition.

In short, the ocean of the Covenant is tumultuous and wide. It casteth ashore the foam of violation and thus rest ye assured. Be engaged in the furtherance of the Mashriqu’l-Adhkár and prepare the means for the diffusion of the divine fragrances. Be not engaged in anything but this, for otherwise thou shalt dissipate thine attention and the work will not advance.

Summary:

The recipient expresses satisfaction with the Convention, noting its positive impact on the Cause of God. Differences among the friends are seen as temporary, with the greatness of the Cause likened to health, curing discord. A special authoritative Center, the future Universal House of Justice, is mentioned as a means to resolve differences. The letter emphasizes the closed doors for dissension in the Bahá’í Faith, attributing discord to personal ambitions rather than doubts about the Covenant. The ocean of the Covenant is described as wide and tumultuous, casting ashore the

foam of violation. The directive is to focus on the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár and the diffusion of divine fragrances.

Key Points:

1. Satisfaction with the Convention:

- The recipient expresses satisfaction with the Convention, viewing it as elevating the Cause of God and demonstrating the power of His Word.

2. Temporary Nature of Differences:

- Differences among the friends are considered temporary, with the greatness of the Cause compared to health, capable of curing discord.

3. Special Authoritative Center:

- A special authoritative Center, the future Universal House of Justice, is mentioned as a means to resolve differences. However, it is noted that it has not yet been instituted.

4. Dissension Due to Personal Ambitions:

- The cause of dissension is attributed to personal ambitions rather than doubts about the validity of the Covenant.

5. Directive for Focus and Engagement:

- The letter advises against engaging in anything other than the furtherance of the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár and the preparation for the diffusion of divine fragrances.

Questions and Answers:

1. What is the recipient's attitude toward the Convention, as expressed in the letter?

- The recipient expresses satisfaction with the Convention, recognizing its positive impact on the Cause of God.

2. How are differences among the friends characterized, and what is the hope for their resolution?

- Differences are considered temporary, likened to ailments, and it is hoped that the greatness of the Cause will clear away these differences.

3. What is mentioned as a means to resolve differences among the Bahá'í community?

- A special authoritative Center, the future Universal House of Justice, is mentioned as a means to resolve differences, although it is noted that it has not yet been instituted.

4. What is identified as the cause of dissension, according to the letter?

- Dissension is attributed to personal ambitions rather than doubts about the validity of the Covenant.

5. What directive is given regarding the recipient's focus and engagement in activities?

- The recipient is advised to focus solely on the furtherance of the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár and the preparation for the diffusion of divine fragrances, avoiding engagement in other matters.

O ye the cherished loved ones of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá! It is a long time now since my inward ear hath heard any sweet melodies out of certain regions, or my heart been gladdened; and this despite the fact that ye are ever present in my thoughts and standing clearly visible before my sight. Filled to overflowing is the goblet of my heart with the wine of the love I bear you, and my yearning to set eyes upon you streameth like the spirit through my arteries and veins. From this it is clear how great is my affliction. At this time and throughout this tempest of calamities now tossing its waves to high heaven, cruel and incessant darts are being hurled against me from every point of the compass, and at every moment, here in the Holy Land, terrifying news is received, and every day bringeth its quota of horror. The Center of Sedition had imagined that it needed but his arrogant rebellion to bring down the Covenant and Testament in ruins; it needed but this, so he thought, to turn the righteous away from the Holy Will. Wherefore he sent out far and wide his leaflets of doubt, devising many a secret scheme. Now he would cry out that God’s edifice had been subverted and His divine commands annulled, and that accordingly, the Covenant and Testament was abolished. Again he would set himself to sighing and groaning that he was being held a prisoner and was kept hungry and thirsty day and night. Another day he would raise an uproar, saying that the oneness of God had been denied, since another Manifestation had been proclaimed, prior to the expiration of a thousand years.

When he saw that his calumnies had no effect, he gradually formed a plan to incite a disturbance. He began stirring up mischief, and went knocking at every door. He started making false accusations to the officials of the Government. He approached some of the foreigners, made himself their intimate, and together with them prepared a document and presented it to the Seat of the Sultanate, bringing consternation to the authorities. Among the many slanderous charges was this, that this hapless one had raised up a standard of revolt, a flag bearing the words *Yá Bahá’u’l-Abhá*; that I had paraded this throughout the countryside, to every city, town and village, and even among the desert tribes, and had summoned all the inhabitants to unite under this flag.

O my Lord, verily I seek refuge with Thee from the very thought of such an act, which is contrary to all the commandments of Bahá’u’lláh, and which would indeed be a mighty wrong that none but a grievous sinner would ever perpetrate. For Thou hast made it incumbent upon us to obey the rulers and kings.

Another of his slanders was that the Shrine on Mount Carmel was a fortress that I had built strong and impregnable—this when the building under construction compriseth six rooms—and that I had named it Medina the Resplendent, while I had named the Holy Tomb¹ Mecca the Glorified. Yet another of his calumnies was that I had established an independent sovereignty, and that—God forbid! God forbid! God forbid!—I had summoned all the believers to join me in this massive wrongdoing. How dire, O my Lord, is his slander!

Yet again, he claimeth that since the Holy Shrine hath become a point visited by pilgrims from all over the world, great damage will accrue to this Government and people. He, the Center of Sedition, averreth that he himself hath had no hand in all these matters, that he is a Sunní of the Sunnites and a devoted follower of Abú-Bakr and ‘Umar, and regardeth Bahá’u’lláh as only a pious man and a mystic; all these things, he saith, were set afoot by this wronged one.

To be brief, a Commission of Investigation was appointed by the Sultán, may the glory of his reign endure. The Commission journeyed hither and immediately upon arrival betook themselves to the house of one of the accusers. They then summoned the group who, working with my brother, had prepared the accusatory document and asked them whether it was true. The group explained

the contents of the document, stated that everything they had reported therein was nothing but the truth, and added further accusations. Thus they functioned at one and the same time as plaintiffs, witnesses, and judge.

The Commission hath now returned to the seat of the Caliphate, and reports of a most frightful nature are coming in daily from that city. However, praised be God, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá remaineth composed and unperturbed. To none do I bear ill will because of this defamation. I have made all my affairs conditioned upon His irresistible Will and I am waiting, indeed in perfect happiness, to offer my life and prepared for whatever dire affliction may be in store. Praise be to God, the loving believers also accept and remain submissive to God’s Will, content with it, radiantly acquiescent, offering thanks.

The Center of Sedition hath imagined that once the blood of this wronged one is spilled out, once I have been cast away on the wide desert sands or drowned in the Mediterranean Sea—nameless, gone without trace, with none to tell of me—then would he at last have a field where he could urge his steed ahead, and with his mallet of lies and doubts, hit hard at the polo ball of his ambitions, and carry off the prize.

Far from it! For even if the sweet musk-scent of faithfulness should pass, and leave no trace behind, who would be drawn by the stench of perfidy? And even if some gazelle of heaven were to be ripped apart by dogs and wolves, who would go running to seek out a ravening wolf? Even should the day of the Mystic Nightingale draw to its close, who would ever lend his ear to the raven’s croak, or the cawing of the crow? What an empty supposition is his! What a foolish presumption! “Their works are like the vapor in a desert which the thirsty dreameth to be water, until when he cometh unto it, he findeth nothing.”²

O ye loved ones of God! Be ye firm of foot, and fixed of heart, and through the power of the Blessed Beauty’s help, stand ye committed to your purpose. Serve ye the Cause of God. Face ye all nations of the world with the constancy and the endurance of the people of Bahá, that all men may be astounded and ask how this could be, that your hearts are as wellsprings of confidence and faith, and as mines so rich in the love of God. Be ye so, that ye shall neither fail nor falter on account of these tragedies in the Holy Land; let not these dread events make you despondent. And if all the believers be put to the sword, and only one be left, let that one cry out in the name of the Lord and tell the joyous tidings; let that one rise up and confront all the peoples of the earth.

Gaze ye not upon the dire happenings at this Illumined Spot. The Holy Land is in danger at all times, and here, the tide of calamities is ever at the flood; for this upraised call hath now been heard around the world, and the fame of it hath gone forth to the ends of the earth. It is because of this that foes, both from within and from without, have turned themselves with subtlety and craft to spreading slander. It is clear that such a place as this would be exposed to danger, for there is no defender here, none to arise and take our side in the face of calumny: here are only a few souls that are homeless, hapless, held captive in this stronghold. No champion have they; there is none to succor them, none to ward off the arrows of lies, the darts of defamation that are hurled against them: none except God.

It behooveth you to ponder on all those well-beloved ones who hastened to the holy field of sacrifice, those precious souls who offered up their lives. Bear ye in mind what streams of sacred blood were poured away, how many a righteous heart was commingled with its gore, how many a breast was the target of tyranny’s spear, how many a chaste body was ripped to shreds. How then could it be right for us even to think of saving ourselves! To curry favor with stranger or kin, and make a show of compromise! Should we not, rather, take the pathway of the righteous, and follow in the footsteps of those great ones gone before?

These few brief days shall pass away, this present life shall vanish from our sight; the roses of this world shall be fresh and fair no more, the garden of this earth's triumphs and delights shall droop and fade. The spring season of life shall turn into the autumn of death, the bright joy of palace halls give way to moonless dark within the tomb. And therefore is none of this worth loving at all, and to this the wise will not anchor his heart.

He who hath knowledge and power will rather seek out the glory of heaven, and spiritual distinction, and the life that dieth not. And such a one longeth to approach the sacred Threshold of God; for in the tavern of this swiftly passing world the man of God will not lie drunken, nor will he even for a moment take his ease, nor stain himself with any fondness for this earthly life.

Nay rather, the friends are stars in the high heavens of guidance, celestial bodies in the skies of divine grace, who with all their powers put the dark to flight. They break down the foundations of malevolence and hate. They cherish but one desire for the world and all its peoples: well-being and peace. By them, the ramparts of warfare and aggression are battered down. They have truthfulness and honest dealing and friendship for their goal, and kindness even toward a vicious foe; until at last they change this prison of treachery, the world, into a mansion of utmost trust, and turn this jail-house of hatred and malevolence and spite, into God's Paradise.

O ye loving friends! Strive ye with heart and soul to make this world the mirror image of the Kingdom, that this nether world may teem with the blessings of the world of God, that the voices of the Company on high may be raised in acclamation, and signs and tokens of the bounties and bestowals of Bahá'u'lláh may encompass all the earth.

Jináb-i-Amín hath expressed the greatest admiration for you honored men and enlightened women, naming and commending you each by each, telling at length of the firmness and constancy ye all have shown, saying that, God be praised, in all Persia the men and women are standing together, straight, strong, unmovable—a mighty edifice solidly raised up; and that ye are engaged with love and joy in spreading abroad the sweet savors of the Lord.

These were tidings of great joy, especially as they have reached me in these days of extreme peril. For the dearest wish of this wronged one is that the friends be spiritual of heart and illumined of mind, and once this grace is granted me, calamity, however afflictive, is but bounty pouring down upon me, like copious rain.

O God, my God! Thou seest me plunged in an ocean of anguish, held fast to the fires of tyranny, and weeping in the darkness of the night. Sleepless I toss and turn upon my bed, mine eyes straining to behold the morning light of faithfulness and trust. I agonize even as a fish, its inward parts afire as it leapeth about in terror upon the sand, yet I ever look for Thy bestowals to appear from every side.

O God, my God! Make thou the believers in other lands to partake of Thine abounding grace, deliver Thou, by Thine unfailing help and bounty, whoso among Thy loved ones in the farthest climes sigheth over the bitter cruelty of his foe. O Lord, they are the captives of Thy love, the prisoners taken by Thy troops. They are the birds that fly in the heavens of Thy guidance, the whales that swim in the ocean of Thy bestowals, the stars that sparkle on the horizon of Thy gifts. They are the defenders of the fortress of Thy law. They are the banners of Thy remembrance amongst men. They are the deep wells of Thy divine compassion, the fountains of Thy favors, the wellsprings of Thy grace.

Keep them ever in safety beneath Thine all-protecting eye. Assist them to exalt Thy Word; make Thou their hearts to be constant in Thy love; strengthen Thou their backs that they may serve Thee well; in servitude, strengthen Thou their powers.

Spread Thou through them Thy sweet savors far and wide; expound through them Thy Holy Writ; make known through them Thine Utterance; fulfill through them Thy Words; through them pour out Thy mercy.

Thou art verily the Mighty, the Powerful. Thou art verily the Clement, the Compassionate.

Summary:

'Abdu'l-Bahá expresses deep affection for the believers despite facing immense affliction. A Center of Sedition spreads false accusations to undermine the Covenant. Accusations include rebellion, building a fortress, and establishing independent sovereignty. A Commission of Investigation, influenced by accusers, poses threats. 'Abdu'l-Bahá urges believers to remain steadfast, dismisses the Center of Sedition's schemes, and emphasizes the spiritual path. Despite danger, believers are encouraged to endure, focusing on the Kingdom's ideals.

Key Points:

1. 'Abdu'l-Bahá expresses love for believers despite personal affliction.
2. Center of Sedition spreads false accusations to undermine the Covenant.
3. Accusations include rebellion, building a fortress, and establishing independent sovereignty.
4. Commission of Investigation, influenced by accusers, poses threats.
5. 'Abdu'l-Bahá urges believers to remain steadfast and prioritize the spiritual path.

Questions and Answers:

1. Q: What false accusations does the Center of Sedition make against 'Abdu'l-Bahá?
- A: Accusations include rebellion, building a fortress, and establishing independent sovereignty.
2. Q: How does 'Abdu'l-Bahá respond to the accusations and threats?
- A: He remains composed, trusts in God's will, and encourages believers to endure and focus on the spiritual path.
3. Q: What is the role of the Commission of Investigation?
- A: The Commission investigates false accusations, but it is influenced by accusers and poses threats to 'Abdu'l-Bahá.
4. Q: What message does 'Abdu'l-Bahá convey to the believers in the face of danger?
- A: Believers are urged to remain steadfast, dismiss false accusations, and prioritize the spiritual path despite external threats.
5. Q: How does 'Abdu'l-Bahá view the sacrifices of the believers?
- A: 'Abdu'l-Bahá highlights the sacrifices made by believers, emphasizing the importance of enduring hardships for the sake of spiritual values and the Kingdom's ideals.

Today, every wise, vigilant and foresighted person is awakened, and to him are unveiled the mysteries of the future which show that nothing save the power of the Covenant is able to stir and move the heart of humanity, just as the New and Old Testaments propounded throughout all regions the Cause of Christ and were the pulsating power in the body of the human world. A tree

that hath a root shall bear fruit, while the tree that hath none, no matter how high and hardy it may be, will eventually wither, perish and become but a log fit for the fire.

The Covenant of God is like unto a vast and fathomless ocean. A billow shall rise and surge therefrom and shall cast ashore all accumulated foam.

Praise be to God that the highest wish entertained by heedful souls is the exaltation of the Word of God and the propagation of divine fragrances. This is, verily, the secure and firm foundation.

Now, like unto the morn, the light of the Sun of Truth hath been shed abroad. Effort must be made that slumbering souls may be awakened, the heedless become vigilant, and that the divine teachings, which constitute the spirit of this age, may reach the ears of the people of the world, may be propagated in the press and set forth with brilliance and eloquence in the assemblages of men.

One's conduct must be like the conduct of Paul, and one's faith similar to that of Peter. This musk-scented breeze shall perfume the nostrils of the people of the world, and this spirit shall resuscitate the dead.

The offensive odor of violation hath temporarily arrested the onward movement of the Cause, for otherwise the divine teachings, like unto the rays of the sun, would immediately spread and permeate all regions.

Thou intendest to print and publish the addresses of 'Abdu'l-Bahá which thou hast compiled. This is indeed very advisable. This service shall cause thee to acquire an effulgent face in the Abhá Kingdom, and shall make thee the object of the praise and gratitude of the friends in the East as well as in the West. But it is to be undertaken with the utmost care, so that the exact text may be reproduced and will exclude all deviations and corruptions committed by former translators.

Summary:

The text emphasizes the pivotal role of the Covenant's power in shaping humanity's destiny, drawing parallels with the influential force of the New and Old Testaments. It likens the Covenant to a vast ocean, from which waves of divine influence will emerge. The primary focus is on the exaltation of the Word of God and the propagation of divine teachings. The text encourages awakening slumbering souls and spreading the teachings through various means, akin to the

conduct of early believers. It acknowledges a temporary hindrance to the Cause's progress due to violations but stresses the need for meticulous publication of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's addresses.

Key Points:

1. Covenant's power compared to the influential force of the New and Old Testaments.
2. Likening the Covenant to a vast and fathomless ocean with transformative potential.
3. Emphasis on the exaltation of the Word of God and the propagation of divine teachings.
4. Encouragement to awaken souls and disseminate teachings through various mediums.
5. Recognition of a temporary hindrance to the Cause's progress due to violations.
6. Emphasis on meticulous publication of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's addresses.

Questions and Answers:

1. Q: What does the text compare the Covenant's power to?
- A: The Covenant's power is compared to the influential force of the New and Old Testaments.
2. Q: What analogy is used to describe the Covenant's potential impact?
- A: The Covenant is likened to a vast and fathomless ocean with transformative potential.
3. Q: What is the primary focus regarding the teachings of the Bahá'í Faith?
- A: The primary focus is on the exaltation of the Word of God and the propagation of divine teachings.
4. Q: How does the text encourage believers to contribute to the cause?
- A: Believers are encouraged to awaken souls and spread divine teachings through various means, similar to the conduct of early believers.
5. Q: What acknowledgment does the text make regarding the progress of the Cause?
- A: The text recognizes a temporary hindrance to the Cause's progress due to violations, emphasizing the need for vigilance.

– 190 –

Thou seest me, O my God, bowed down in lowliness, humbling myself before Thy commandments, submitting to Thy sovereignty, trembling at the might of Thy dominion, fleeing from Thy wrath, entreating Thy grace, relying upon Thy forgiveness, shaking with awe at Thy fury. I implore Thee with a throbbing heart, with streaming tears and a yearning soul, and in complete detachment from all things, to make Thy lovers as rays of light across Thy realms, and to aid Thy chosen servants to exalt Thy Word, that their faces may turn beauteous and bright with splendor, that their hearts may be filled with mysteries, and that every soul may lay down its burden of sin. Guard them then from the aggressor, from him who hath become a shameless and blasphemous doer of wrong.

Verily Thy lovers thirst, O my Lord; lead them to the wellspring of bounty and grace. Verily, they hunger; send down unto them Thy heavenly table. Verily, they are naked; robe them in the garments of learning and knowledge.

Heroes are they, O my Lord, lead them to the field of battle. Guides are they, make them to speak out with arguments and proofs. Ministering servants are they, cause them to pass round the

cup that brimmeth with the wine of certitude. O my God, make them to be songsters that carol in fair gardens, make them lions that couch in the thickets, whales that plunge in the vasty deep.

Verily Thou art He of abounding grace. There is none other God save Thee, the Mighty, the Powerful, the Ever-Bestowing.

O ye my spiritual friends! For some time now the pressures have been severe, the restrictions as shackles of iron. This hapless wronged one was left single and alone, for all the ways were barred. Friends were forbidden access to me, the trusted were shut away, the foe compassed me about, the evil watchers were fierce and bold. At every instant, fresh affliction. At every breath, new anguish. Both kin and stranger on the attack; indeed, onetime lovers, faithless and unpitied, were worse than foes as they rose up to harass me. None was there to defend ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, no helper, no protector, no ally, no champion. I was drowning in a shoreless sea, and ever beating upon my ears were the raven-croaking voices of the disloyal.

At every daybreak, triple darkness. At eventide, stone-hearted tyranny. And never a moment’s peace, and never any balm for the spear’s red wounds. From moment to moment, word would come of my exile to the Fezzan sands; from hour to hour, I was to be cast into the endless sea. Now they would say that these homeless wanderers were ruined at last; again that the cross would soon be put to use. This wasted frame of mine was to be made the target for bullet or arrow; or again, this failing body was to be cut to ribbons by the sword.

Our alien acquaintances could not contain themselves for joy, and our treacherous friends exulted. “Praise be to God,” one would exclaim, “Here is our dream come true.” And another, “God be thanked, our spearhead found the heart.”

Affliction beat upon this captive like the heavy rains of spring, and the victories of the malevolent swept down in a relentless flood, and still ‘Abdu’l-Bahá remained happy and serene, and relied on the grace of the All-Merciful. That pain, that anguish, was a paradise of all delights; those chains were the necklace of a king on a throne in heaven. Content with God’s will, utterly resigned, my heart surrendered to whatever fate had in store, I was happy. For a boon companion, I had great joy.

Finally a time came when the friends turned inconsolable, and abandoned all hope. It was then the morning dawned, and flooded all with unending light. The towering clouds were scattered, the dismal shadows fled. In that instant the fetters fell away, the chains were lifted off the neck of this homeless one and hung round the neck of the foe. Those dire straits were changed to ease, and on the horizon of God’s bounties the sun of hope rose up. All this was out of God’s grace and His bestowals.

And yet, from one point of view, this wanderer was saddened and despondent. For what pain, in the time to come, could I seek comfort? At the news of what granted wish could I rejoice? There was no more tyranny, no more affliction, no tragical events, no tribulations. My only joy in this swiftly passing world was to tread the stony path of God and to endure hard tests and all material griefs. For otherwise, this earthly life would prove barren and vain, and better would be death. The tree of being would produce no fruit; the sown field of this existence would yield no harvest. Thus it is my hope that once again some circumstance will make my cup of anguish to brim over, and that beauteous Love, that Slayer of souls, will dazzle the beholders again. Then will this heart be blissful, this soul be blessed.

O Divine Providence! Lift to Thy lovers’ lips a cup brimful of anguish. To the yearners on Thy pathway, make sweetness but a sting, and poison honey-sweet. Set Thou our heads for ornaments on the points of spears. Make Thou our hearts the targets for pitiless arrows and darts. Raise Thou this withered soul to life on the martyr’s field, make Thou his faded heart to

drink the draught of tyranny, and thus grow fresh and fair once more. Make him to be drunk with the wine of Thine Eternal Covenant, make him a reveler holding high his cup. Help him to fling away his life; grant that for Thy sake, he be offered up.

Thou art the Mighty, the Powerful. Thou art the Knower, the Seer, the Hearer.

Summary:

The prayer reflects the Abdu'l-Bahá's profound humility, submission to God's commandments, and fervent supplication for divine assistance. It entreats God to empower His lovers, protect them from aggression, and fulfill their spiritual needs. Despite intense trials and betrayals, the author remains content, finding joy in God's will. The narrative shifts from despair to hope as divine intervention frees Abdu'l-Bahá from persecution, while expressing a longing for renewed challenges in the path of God.

Key Points:

1. Profound humility and submission to God's sovereignty.
2. Supplication for God's aid, protection of His lovers, and fulfillment of their spiritual needs.
3. Contentment and joy in God's will despite intense trials and betrayals.
4. Divine intervention leading to freedom from persecution and the end of oppressive circumstances.
5. Longing for renewed challenges in the path of God as a source of joy and spiritual fulfillment.

Questions and Answers:

1. Q: What is the primary theme of the prayer?
- A: The primary theme is profound humility, submission to God's commandments, and fervent supplication for divine assistance.
2. Q: How does Abdu'l-Bahá express contentment despite trials and betrayals?
- A: Abdu'l-Bahá finds contentment and joy in God's will, remaining steadfast despite intense trials and betrayals.
3. Q: What is the shift in the narrative from despair to hope?
- A: Divine intervention frees the author from persecution, shifting the narrative from despair to hope.
4. Q: What is Abdu'l-Bahá's response to the end of oppressive circumstances?
- A: Abdu'l-Bahá expresses a longing for renewed challenges in the path of God, viewing them as a source of joy and spiritual fulfillment.
5. Q: What does Abdu'l-Bahá supplicate for regarding God's lovers?
- A: Abdu'l-Bahá supplicates for God to empower His lovers, protect them from aggression, and fulfill their spiritual needs.

O thou who hast been sore afflicted on the pathway of the Covenant! Anguish and torment, when suffered on the pathway of the Lord, Him of manifest signs, is only favor and grace; affliction is

but mercy, and grief a gift from God. Poison is sugar on the tongue, and wrath is kindness, nourishing the soul.

Then praise thou Him, the loving Provider, for having ordained this dire affliction, which is but bounty unalloyed.

If I, like Abraham, through flames must go,
Or yet like John¹ a bloodstained road must run;
If, Joseph-like, Thou'd cast me in a well,
Or shut me up within a prison cell—
Or make me e'en as poor as Mary's Son—
I will not go from Thee,
But ever stand
My soul and body bowed to Thy command.

Summary:

The passage addresses someone who has faced severe afflictions on the path of the Covenant. It conveys the perspective that suffering on the path of the Lord is a form of divine favor and mercy. The tone is one of acceptance and gratitude for the afflictions, comparing them to sugar on the tongue or kindness nourishing the soul. The concluding lines express a steadfast commitment to

remain devoted to God, even in the face of challenges akin to those experienced by figures like Abraham, John, and Joseph.

Key Points:

1. Afflictions on the path of the Covenant are viewed as divine favor and grace.
2. Suffering is seen as a form of mercy and a gift from God.
3. The analogy of poison being like sugar on the tongue and wrath being considered kindness.
4. Gratitude expressed for the ordained affliction as unalloyed bounty.
5. Commitment to remain devoted to God, regardless of challenges, using the examples of Abraham, John, Joseph, and Mary's Son.

Questions and Answers:

1. Q: How does the passage view afflictions on the path of the Covenant?
- A: Afflictions are considered divine favor and grace, and suffering is seen as a form of mercy and a gift from God.
2. Q: What analogies are used to describe the nature of afflictions?
- A: The passage uses the analogies of poison being like sugar on the tongue and wrath being considered kindness nourishing the soul.
3. Q: How is gratitude expressed in the passage?
- A: Gratitude is expressed for the ordained affliction, seen as unalloyed bounty from God.
4. Q: What figures from religious narratives are mentioned in relation to challenges?
- A: The passage refers to figures like Abraham, John, Joseph, and Mary's Son, using their experiences as examples of facing challenges on the path of devotion to God.
5. Q: What is the overall commitment expressed in the concluding lines?
- A: The commitment to remain devoted to God is expressed, even in the face of challenges similar to those experienced by figures like Abraham, John, Joseph, and Mary's Son.

– 192 –

Today, the Lord of Hosts is the defender of the Covenant, the forces of the Kingdom protect it, heavenly souls tender their services, and heavenly angels promulgate and spread it broadcast. If it is considered with insight, it will be seen that all the forces of the universe, in the last analysis serve the Covenant. In the future it shall be made evident and manifest. In view of this fact, what can these weak and feeble souls achieve? Hardy plants that are destitute of roots and are deprived of the outpourings of the cloud of mercy will not last. What then may be expected from feeble weeds?...

Summary:

The passage emphasizes that the Covenant is defended by the Lord of Hosts, protected by the forces of the Kingdom, and promoted by heavenly souls and angels. It suggests that all the forces in the universe ultimately serve the Covenant, and the weakness of some individuals is highlighted.

The analogy of hardy plants with roots thriving, compared to feeble weeds without roots, is used to illustrate the potential endurance or lack thereof.

Key Points:

1. The Lord of Hosts is the defender of the Covenant.
2. Forces of the Kingdom protect the Covenant.
3. Heavenly souls and angels actively promote and spread the Covenant.
4. All forces in the universe, in the grand scheme, serve the Covenant.
5. Weak and feeble individuals are contrasted with hardy plants thriving due to roots, emphasizing the importance of spiritual foundation.

Questions and Answers:

1. Q: Who is presented as the defender of the Covenant in the passage?
- A: The Lord of Hosts is presented as the defender of the Covenant.
2. Q: What entities protect the Covenant according to the passage?
- A: The forces of the Kingdom are stated to protect the Covenant.
3. Q: Which beings are involved in promoting and spreading the Covenant?
- A: Heavenly souls and angels are mentioned as entities actively involved in promulgating and spreading the Covenant.
4. Q: According to the passage, what is the ultimate service of all forces in the universe?
- A: The passage suggests that, in the grand scheme, all forces in the universe ultimately serve the Covenant.
5. Q: What analogy is used to illustrate the endurance or lack thereof in individuals?
- A: The analogy of hardy plants with roots thriving, compared to feeble weeds without roots, is used to illustrate the potential endurance or lack thereof in individuals.

– 193 –

It is daybreak, and from the rising-point of the invisible realms of God, the light of unity is dawning; and streaming and beating down from the hidden world of the Kingdom of oneness there cometh a flood of abounding grace. Glad tidings of the Kingdom are sounding from every side, and wafting in from every direction are the first morning signs of the exalting of God's Word and the upraising of His Cause. The word of unity is spreading, the verses of oneness are being sung, the sea of God's bestowals is tossing high its waves, and in plunging cataracts His blessings are pouring down.

The confirmations of Him Who is the Ever-Forgiving have wrapped every clime in light, the armies of the Company on high are rushing forward to do battle at the side of the friends of the Lord and carry the day, the fame of the Ancient Beauty—may my life be offered up for His loved ones—resoundeth from pole to pole and word of the Holy Cause hath spread to east and west.

All these things bring joy to the heart, and yet 'Abdu'l-Bahá is sunk deep in an ocean of grief, and pain and anguish have so affected my limbs and members that utter weakness hath overtaken my whole body. Note ye that when, singly and alone, with none to second me, I upraised the call of God around the world, the peoples thereof rose up to oppose, to dispute, to deny. On one side,

it is clear how the religionists of the past have mounted their attack at all points; again, there cometh word of the lying mockers and the extreme limits to which they are going to pull out the Divine Tree by the roots. What malicious and slanderous charges they bring against the Ancient Beauty, what pamphlets filled with wicked and depraved allegations they are busily writing and spreading against the Most Great Name! And now, in deepest secrecy, they are straining every nerve to deal this Faith a fearsome blow.

Again have the prideful devised all manner of plots and schemes to completely disable the Cause of God and to erase the name of 'Abdu'l-Bahá from the Book of Life.

And now, added to all these tribulations, these miseries, these enemy attacks, there hath arisen a dust cloud of ill will amongst the believers themselves. This in spite of the fact that the Cause of the Ancient Beauty is the very essence of love, the very channel of oneness, existing only that all may become the waves of one sea, and bright stars of the same endless sky, and pearls within the shell of singleness, and gleaming jewels quarried from the mines of unity; that they may become servants one to another, adore one another, bless one another, praise one another; that each one may loose his tongue and extol the rest without exception, each one voice his gratitude to all the rest; that all should lift up their eyes to the horizon of glory, and remember that they are linked to the Holy Threshold; that they should see nothing but good in one another, hear nothing but praise of one another, and speak no word of one another save only to praise.

There are indeed certain ones who tread this way of righteousness, and God be thanked, these are strengthened and supported by heavenly power in every land. But others have not arisen as they ought to this gloried and exalted station, and this doth lay upon the heart of 'Abdu'l-Bahá a heavy burden of grief, of inconceivable grief. For no tempest more perilous than this could ever assail the Cause of God, nor could anything else so diminish the influence of His Word.

It behooveth all the beloved of God to become as one, to gather together under the protection of a single flag, to stand for a uniform body of opinion, to follow one and the same pathway, to hold fast to a single resolve. Let them forget their divergent theories and put aside their conflicting views since, God be praised, our purpose is one, our goal is one. We are the servants of one Threshold, we all draw our nourishment from the same one Source, we all are gathered in the shade of the same high Tabernacle, we all are sheltered under the one celestial Tree.

O beloved of the Lord! If any soul speak ill of an absent one, the only result will clearly be this: he will dampen the zeal of the friends and tend to make them indifferent. For backbiting is divisive, it is the leading cause among the friends of a disposition to withdraw. If any individual should speak ill of one who is absent, it is incumbent on his hearers, in a spiritual and friendly manner, to stop him, and say in effect: would this detraction serve any useful purpose? Would it please the Blessed Beauty, contribute to the lasting honor of the friends, promote the holy Faith, support the Covenant, or be of any possible benefit to any soul? No, never! On the contrary, it would make the dust to settle so thickly on the heart that the ears would hear no more, and the eyes would no longer behold the light of truth.

If, however, a person setteth about speaking well of another, opening his lips to praise another, he will touch an answering chord in his hearers and they will be stirred up by the breathings of God. Their hearts and souls will rejoice to know that, God be thanked, here is a soul in the Faith who is a focus of human perfections, a very embodiment of the bounties of the Lord, one whose tongue is eloquent, and whose face shineth, in whatever gathering he may be, one who hath victory upon his brow, and who is a being sustained by the sweet savors of God.

Now which is the better way? I swear this by the beauty of the Lord: whensoever I hear good of the friends, my heart filleth up with joy; but whensoever I find even a hint that they are on bad

terms one with another, I am overwhelmed by grief. Such is the condition of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá. Then judge from this where your duty lieth.

God be praised, wherever we turn, the Ancient Beauty hath opened wide the gates of grace, and hath in unmistakable words announced glad tidings of victory through the Lord’s sustaining help. Through love hath He carried off the hearts of the believers, and He hath entrusted their triumph to the armies of the Concourse on high.

Now amidst all the peoples of the world must the beloved arise, with a heart even as the daystar, a strong inward urge, a shining brow, a musk-scented breath, a tongue speaking ever of God, an exposition crystal-clear, a high resolve, a power born of heaven, a spiritual character, a confirmation nothing short of the divine. Let them one and all become as a splendor on the horizon of heaven, and in the skies of the world a dazzling star. Let them be fruitful trees in the celestial bowers, sweet-scented blooms in the divine gardens; let them be verses of perfection on the page of the universe, words of oneness in the Book of Life. This is the first age, and the early beginnings of the dispensation of the Most Great Light, wherefore, within this century, virtues must be acquired, goodly qualities must be perfected within this span of time. In these very days the Abhá Paradise must pitch its pavilions on the plains of the world. The lights of reality must now be revealed, and the secrets of God’s bestowals must now be made known, and now must the olden grace shine forth and this world change into the pleasure-ground of heaven, the garden of God. And out of pure hearts, and through heavenly bounties, all the perfections, qualities and attributes of the divine must now be made manifest.

At all times doth ‘Abdu’l-Bahá supplicate and with tears entreat the Almighty at the sacred Threshold, and crieth out:

O Thou kind Lord! We are servants of Thy Threshold, taking shelter at Thy holy Door. We seek no refuge save only this strong pillar, turn nowhere for a haven but unto Thy safekeeping. Protect us, bless us, support us, make us such that we shall love but Thy good pleasure, utter only Thy praise, follow only the pathway of truth, that we may become rich enough to dispense with all save Thee, and receive our gifts from the sea of Thy beneficence, that we may ever strive to exalt Thy Cause and to spread Thy sweet savors far and wide, that we may become oblivious of self and occupied only with Thee, and disown all else and be caught up in Thee.

O Thou Provider, O Thou Forgiver! Grant us Thy grace and loving-kindness, Thy gifts and Thy bestowals, and sustain us, that we may attain our goal. Thou art the Powerful, the Able, the Knower, the Seer; and verily Thou art the Generous, and verily Thou art the All-Merciful, and verily Thou art the Ever-Forgiving, He to Whom repentance is due, He Who forgiveth even the most grievous of sins.

Summary:

The passage speaks of the dawn of unity and abounding grace in the Cause of God. Despite the joyous tidings, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá expresses deep grief over external attacks on the Faith, internal dissension among believers, and the divisive effects of backbiting. He urges unity, mutual praise, and avoidance of divisive talk. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá prays for heavenly support, emphasizing the need

for believers to become channels of divine attributes, spread the teachings, and contribute to the establishment of the Abhá Paradise.

Key Points:

1. Dawn of unity and abounding grace in the Cause of God.
2. External attacks on the Faith, including malicious charges and secret plots.
3. Internal dissension among believers causing grief to ‘Abdu’l-Bahá.
4. Emphasis on the need for unity, mutual praise, and avoidance of divisive talk.
5. Call for believers to become channels of divine attributes, spread the teachings, and contribute to the establishment of the Abhá Paradise.

Questions and Answers:

1. Q: What is the main theme of the passage?
- A: The passage revolves around the dawn of unity and abounding grace in the Cause of God, addressing external attacks, internal dissension, and the need for believers to contribute to the establishment of the Abhá Paradise.
2. Q: Why does ‘Abdu’l-Bahá express deep grief despite the joyous tidings?
- A: ‘Abdu’l-Bahá expresses grief due to external attacks on the Faith, internal dissension among believers, and the divisive effects of backbiting.
3. Q: What does ‘Abdu’l-Bahá emphasize as a solution to internal dissension?
- A: ‘Abdu’l-Bahá emphasizes the need for unity, mutual praise, and the avoidance of divisive talk among believers.
4. Q: What is the role of believers in the context of the passage?
- A: Believers are called to become channels of divine attributes, spread the teachings, and contribute to the establishment of the Abhá Paradise.
5. Q: What is the focus of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s supplication at the sacred Threshold?
- A: ‘Abdu’l-Bahá supplicates for divine grace, loving-kindness, gifts, and support, seeking to be occupied only with God and the exaltation of His Cause.

– 194 –

O ye the sincere loved ones of the Abhá Beauty! In these days the Cause of God, the world over, is fast growing in power and, day by day, is spreading further and further to the utmost bounds of the earth. Its enemies, therefore, from all the kindreds and peoples of the world, are growing aggressive, malevolent, envious and bitterly hostile. It is incumbent upon the loved ones of God to exercise the greatest care and prudence in all things, whether great or small, to take counsel together and unitedly resist the onslaught of the stirrers up of strife and the movers of mischief. They must endeavor to consort in a friendly spirit with everyone, must follow moderation in their conduct, must have respect and consideration one for another and show loving-kindness and tender regard to all the peoples of the world. They must be patient and long-suffering, that they may grow to become the divine magnets of the Abhá Kingdom and acquire the dynamic power of the hosts of the realm on high.

The fleeting hours of man's life on earth pass swiftly by and the little that still remaineth shall come to an end, but that which endureth and lasteth for evermore is the fruit that man reapeth from his servitude at the Divine Threshold. Behold the truth of this saying, how abundant and glorious are the proofs thereof in the world of being!

The glory of glories rest upon the people of Bahá!

Summary:

The passage addresses the growing power of the Cause of God worldwide, accompanied by increased aggression from its enemies. Believers are urged to exercise care, prudence, and unity, resisting strife and mischief. The emphasis is on friendliness, moderation, respect, and love toward all. The fleeting nature of life on earth is contrasted with the enduring fruit reaped from servitude at the Divine Threshold. The passage concludes with a blessing for the people of Bahá.

Key Points:

1. Growth of the Cause of God globally and intensified hostility from enemies.
2. Call for believers to exercise care, prudence, and unity.
3. Emphasis on friendliness, moderation, respect, and love towards all people.
4. Contrast between the fleeting nature of earthly life and the enduring fruit of servitude at the Divine Threshold.
5. A blessing for the people of Bahá.

Questions and Answers:

1. Q: What is the current state of the Cause of God worldwide according to the passage?
- A: The Cause of God is fast growing in power worldwide, accompanied by increased aggression from enemies.
2. Q: What is the primary counsel given to the loved ones of God in response to the growing aggression?
- A: The loved ones of God are counseled to exercise the greatest care and prudence, to resist strife and mischief, and to unite against the aggressors.
3. Q: What virtues are emphasized for believers to cultivate in their conduct?
- A: Believers are encouraged to cultivate friendliness, moderation, respect, and love toward all people.
4. Q: What contrast does the passage draw between earthly life and the Divine Threshold?
- A: The passage contrasts the fleeting nature of life on earth with the enduring fruit that comes from servitude at the Divine Threshold.
5. Q: How does the passage conclude?
- A: The passage concludes with a blessing, stating, "The glory of glories rest upon the people of Bahá."

O thou exalted bough of the divine Lote-Tree! ...When thou art disdained and rejected by the wicked doers be not cast down; and at the power and stiffneckedness of the presumptuous be

neither vexed nor sick at heart; for such is the way of heedless souls, from time out of mind. “O the misery of men! No Messenger cometh unto them but they laugh Him to scorn!”¹

Indeed, the attacks and the obstructiveness of the ignorant but cause the Word of God to be exalted, and spread His signs and tokens far and wide. Were it not for this opposition by the disdainful, this obduracy of the slanderers, this shouting from the pulpits, this crying and wailing of great and small alike, these accusations of unbelief leveled by the ignorant, this uproar from the foolish—how could news of the advent of the Primal Point and the bright dawning of the Daystar of Bahá ever have reached to east and west? How else could the planet have been rocked from pole to pole? How else could Persia have become the focal point of scattering splendors, and Asia Minor the radiating heart of the beauty of the Lord? However else could the flame of the Manifestation have spread into the south? By what means could the cries of God have been heard in the far north? How else could His summons have been heard in the continents of America and of Africa the dark? How else could the cockcrow of Heaven have penetrated those ears? How else could the sweet parrots of India have come upon this sugar, or nightingales have lifted up their warblings out of the land of ‘Irâq? What else could set the east and west to dancing, how else could this Consecrated Spot become the throne of the Beauty of God? How else could Sinai behold this burning brightness, how could the Advent’s flame adorn that mount? How else could the Holy Land be made the footstool of God’s beauty, and the holy vale of Towa² become the site of excellence and grace, the sacred spot where Moses put off His shoes? How could the breaths of heaven be carried across the Vale of Holiness, how could the sweet-scented, airy streams that blow out of the Abhá gardens ever be perceived by those that dwell on the Verdant Isle? How else could the pledges of the Prophets, the joyous tidings of the holy Seers of old, the stirring promises given unto this Sacred Place by the Manifestations of God, ever have been fulfilled?

How else could the Tree of Anísá have been planted here, the flag of the Testament be flown, the intoxicating cup of the Covenant be lifted to these lips? All these blessings and bestowals, the very means of proclaiming the Faith, have come about through the scorn of the ignorant, the opposition of the foolish, the stubbornness of the dull-witted, the violence of the aggressor. Had it not been for these things, the news of the Báb’s advent would not, to this day, have reached even into lands hard by. Wherefore we should never grieve over the blindness of the unwitting, the attacks of the foolish, the hostility of the low and base, the heedlessness of the divines, the charges of infidelity brought against us by the empty of mind. Such too was their way in ages past, nor would it be thus if they were of those who know; but they are benighted, and they come not close to understanding what is told them.³

Wherefore doth it befit thyself, an offshoot of the Holy Tree of God, branched out from that mighty Trunk—and it behooveth ourselves as well—so to burn, through the sustaining grace of the Ancient Beauty—may my life be offered up for His Most Holy Shrine—with this kindled flame out of heaven, that we will light the fire of God’s love from pole to pole. Let us take for our example the great and sacred Tree of the exalted Báb—may my life be offered up for Him. Like Him let us bare our breasts to the shafts of agony, like Him make our hearts to be targets for the spears decreed by God. Let us, like candles, burn away; as moths, let us scorch our wings; as the field larks, vent our plaintive cries; as the nightingales, burst forth in lamentations.

Even as the clouds let us shed down tears, and as the lightning flashes let us laugh at our coursings through east and west. By day, by night, let us think but of spreading the sweet savors of God. Let us not keep on forever with our fancies and illusions, with our analyzing and interpreting and circulating of complex dubieties. Let us put aside all thoughts of self; let us close our eyes to all on earth, let us neither make known our sufferings nor complain of our wrongs.

Rather let us become oblivious of our own selves, and drinking down the wine of heavenly grace, let us cry out our joy, and lose ourselves in the beauty of the All-Glorious.

O thou Afnán of the divine Lote-Tree! We must strive, each one of us, to become as fecund boughs and to yield an ever sweeter and more wholesome fruit, that the branch may prove itself to be a continuation of the root, and the part be in harmony with the whole. It is my hope that out of the bounty of the Greatest Name and the loving-kindness of the Primal Point—may my soul be offered up for Them both—we shall become the means of exalting the Word of God around the world; that we may ever render services unto the Source of our Cause and spread over all the canopy of the true and holy zeal of the Lord. That from over the fields of grace, we may make zephyrs to blow, bringing to man the sweet scents that come from the gardens of God. That we may make of this world the Abhá Paradise, and change this nether place into the Kingdom of Heaven.

It is true that every one of God's servants, and in particular those who are on fire with the Faith, have been allotted this task of servitude to Almighty God; still, the duty imposed upon us is greater than that which hath been laid upon the rest. To Him do we look for grace and favor and strength.

All praise and thanksgiving be unto the Blessed Beauty, for calling into action the armies of His Abhá Kingdom, and sending forth to us His never-interrupted aid, dependable as the rising stars. In every region of the earth hath He supported this single, lonely servant, at every moment hath He made known to me the signs and tokens of His love. He hath cast into a stupor all those who are clinging to their vain illusions, and made them infamous in the sight of high and low. He hath caused those who run after their fads and fancies to become objects of general reproach, and hath exposed the arrogant to public view; He hath made those of the friends who proved infirm of faith to serve as a warning to every beholder, and hath caused the leaders of those who waver to love but themselves and sink down in self-conceit. Meanwhile, by the power of His might, He hath made this broken-winged bird to rise up before all who dwell on earth. He hath shattered the serried ranks of the rebellious, and hath given the victory to the hosts of salvation, and breathed into the hearts of those who stand firm in the Covenant and Testament the breath of everlasting life.

Convey thou the greetings of Abhá to each one of the Afnán, branched from the Holy Tree. The glory rest upon thee and upon all the Afnán who remain faithful and true to the Covenant.

Summary:

The passage encourages resilience in the face of opposition, asserting that disdain and hostility from the ignorant only serve to exalt the Word of God. The text cites historical instances of opposition leading to the spread of divine messages across the globe. Believers are urged to bear adversity with a spirit like the Báb, facing agony and becoming targets for divine decrees. The metaphor of candles, moths, field larks, and nightingales is used to emphasize sacrifice and

lamentation. The focus should be on spreading the sweet savors of God, oblivious to personal suffering or complaint.

Key Points:

1. Opposition and disdain from the ignorant contribute to the exaltation of the Word of God.
2. Historical instances of hostility leading to the global spread of divine messages are cited.
3. Believers are urged to face adversity with the spirit of the Báb, being targets for divine decrees.
4. Metaphors of candles, moths, and birds emphasize sacrifice, lamentation, and spreading divine fragrance.
5. The call is to focus on serving the Cause, spreading the sweet savors of God, and becoming oblivious to personal suffering.

Questions and Answers:

1. Q: How does the passage describe the impact of disdain and hostility on the Word of God?
- A: Opposition and disdain from the ignorant are said to exalt the Word of God and spread divine signs.
2. Q: What historical examples are given to illustrate the positive outcome of opposition?
- A: The text refers to the advent of the Báb and the resulting spread of divine messages to various regions of the world.
3. Q: What is the metaphorical significance of candles, moths, field larks, and nightingales in the passage?
- A: These metaphors emphasize sacrifice, lamentation, and the focus on spreading divine fragrance and joy.
4. Q: How does the passage advise believers to respond to adversity and opposition?
- A: Believers are urged to face adversity with a spirit like the Báb, becoming targets for divine decrees, and focusing on spreading the sweet savors of God.
5. Q: What is the ultimate call to action for believers according to the passage?
- A: Believers are called to serve the Cause, spread the sweet savors of God, and become oblivious to personal suffering while focusing on the divine mission.

– 196 –

O thou who art steadfast in the Covenant! Thy letter of 9 September 1909 hath been received. Be thou neither grieved nor despondent over what hath come to pass. This trouble overtook thee as thou didst walk the path of God, wherefore it should bring thee joy. We addressed the friends in writing ere this, and made a verbal statement as well, to the effect that the friends in the West will unquestionably have their share of the calamities befalling the friends in the East. It is inevitable that, walking the pathway of Bahá'u'lláh, they too will become targets for persecution by the oppressors.

Consider how at the beginning of the Christian era the Apostles were afflicted, and what torments they endured in the pathway of Christ. Every day of their lives they were targets for the Pharisees' darts of mockery, vilification and abuse. They bore great hardship; they saw prison; and most of them carried to their lips the sweet cup of martyrdom.

Now ye, as well, must certainly become my partners to some slight degree, and accept your share of tests and sorrows. But these episodes shall pass away, while that abiding glory and eternal life shall remain unchanged forever. Moreover, these afflictions shall be the cause of great advancement.

I ask of God that thou, His husbandman, shalt plough the hard and stony ground, and water it, and scatter seeds therein—for this will show how skilful is the farmer, while any man can sow and till where the ground is soft, and clear of brambles and thorns.

Summary:

The message reassures the recipient, steadfast in the Covenant, who faced troubles on the path of God. The troubles are depicted as a source of joy, aligning with the inevitable tests that followers of Bahá'u'lláh will encounter. Drawing parallels with the early Christian era, the letter emphasizes that persecution is part of the journey, akin to the hardships endured by the Apostles. The recipients are called to accept their share of tests and sorrows, understanding that these afflictions lead to

spiritual advancement. The metaphor of ploughing stony ground signifies the challenges faced on the path, emphasizing the skill required to navigate difficulties.

Key Points:

1. **Reassurance in Trials:** The recipient is encouraged not to be despondent over the troubles faced on the path of God, as these challenges should bring joy.
2. **Inevitability of Persecution:** Followers in the West will face their share of calamities, mirroring the persecution experienced by Eastern believers.
3. **Parallels with Christian Era:** The trials endured by the Apostles in the early Christian era are cited as an example of the challenges faced on the spiritual path.
4. **Acceptance of Tests:** Believers are called to accept their share of tests and sorrows, understanding that these experiences lead to spiritual advancement.
5. **Metaphor of Ploughing Stony Ground:** The challenges faced are likened to ploughing hard and stony ground, requiring skill and effort. The metaphor emphasizes the potential for growth amid difficulties.

Questions and Answers:

1. Q: How does the letter portray the troubles faced by the recipient on the path of God?*
- A: The troubles are seen as a source of joy and are to be expected, aligning with the path of Bahá'u'lláh.

2. Q: What parallel is drawn with the early Christian era?*
- A: The letter compares the persecution faced by believers in the West to the hardships endured by the Apostles during the beginning of the Christian era.

3. Q: How does the letter characterize the inevitability of persecution?*
- A: The inevitability of persecution is emphasized, stating that followers of Bahá'u'lláh will become targets for oppressors.

4. Q: What is the believers' call to action in response to the trials they face?*
- A: Believers are urged to accept their share of tests and sorrows, recognizing that these experiences lead to spiritual advancement.

5. Q: What does the metaphor of ploughing stony ground signify in the context of the letter?*
- A: The metaphor symbolizes the challenges faced on the spiritual path, emphasizing the skill required to navigate difficulties and promote growth.

– 197 –

O thou servant of God! Do not grieve at the afflictions and calamities that have befallen thee. All calamities and afflictions have been created for man so that he may spurn this mortal world—a world to which he is much attached. When he experienceth severe trials and hardships, then his nature will recoil and he will desire the eternal realm—a realm which is sanctified from all afflictions and calamities. Such is the case with the man who is wise. He shall never drink from a cup which is at the end distasteful, but, on the contrary, he will seek the cup of pure and limpid water. He will not taste of the honey that is mixed with poison.

Praise thou God, that thou hast been tried and hast experienced such a test. Be patient and grateful. Turn thy face to the divine Kingdom and strive that thou mayest acquire merciful characteristics, mayest become illumined and acquire the attributes of the Kingdom and of the Lord. Endeavor to become indifferent to the pleasures of this world and to its comfort, to remain firm and steadfast in the Covenant and to promulgate the Cause of God.

This is the cause of the exaltation of man, the cause of his glory and of his salvation.

Summary:

The letter encourages the servant of God not to grieve over afflictions, as these trials are intended to detach humanity from the material world. Afflictions prompt a recoil from worldly attachments, leading one to desire the eternal realm free from calamities. The wise person, experiencing trials, seeks the cup of pure water and avoids the honey mixed with poison. Gratitude and patience in the

face of tests are emphasized, urging the individual to turn towards the divine Kingdom, acquire merciful characteristics, and become steadfast in the Covenant.

Key Points:

1. **Purpose of Afflictions:** Calamities are created for humanity to spurn attachments to the mortal world, prompting a desire for the sanctified eternal realm.
2. **Wise Response to Trials:** A wise person recoils from worldly pleasures and remains steadfast during severe trials, seeking attributes of the Kingdom and the Lord.
3. **Detachment from Worldly Comfort:** The encouragement is to become indifferent to the pleasures and comforts of the world, focusing on acquiring virtues and remaining firm in the Covenant.
4. **Gratitude and Patience:** The recipient is advised to be patient and grateful for the trials experienced, viewing them as a means to acquire merciful characteristics.
5. **Exaltation and Salvation:** The exaltation and salvation of humanity are linked to enduring trials, remaining steadfast in the Covenant, and promoting the Cause of God.

Questions and Answers:

1. Q: What is the purpose of afflictions according to the letter?
- A: Afflictions are intended to help humanity spurn attachments to the mortal world and desire the eternal realm.
2. Q: How does the wise person respond to trials, according to the letter?
- A: The wise person seeks the cup of pure water, recoils from worldly pleasures, and acquires attributes of the Kingdom and the Lord.
3. Q: What is the recommended attitude towards worldly comforts in the letter?
- A: The encouragement is to become indifferent to worldly pleasures and comforts, focusing on acquiring virtues.
4. Q: How should the recipient respond to trials, as advised in the letter?
- A: The recipient is advised to be patient and grateful, viewing trials as an opportunity to acquire merciful characteristics.
5. Q: What is linked to the exaltation and salvation of humanity, according to the key points?
- A: Enduring trials, remaining steadfast in the Covenant, and promoting the Cause of God are linked to the exaltation and salvation of humanity.

– 198 –

O thou who art enamored of the breaths of God! I have read thy letter, which cried out with thy love for God and thine irresistible attraction to His Beauty, and its wondrous theme did cheer my heart.

The intent of what I wrote to thee in my previous letter was this, that when exalting the Word of God, there are trials to be met with, and calamities; and that in loving Him, at every moment there are hardships, torments, afflictions.

It behooveth the individual first to value these ordeals, willingly accept them, and eagerly welcome them; only then should he proceed with teaching the Faith and exalting the Word of God.

In such a state, no matter what may befall him in his love for God—harassment, reproach, vilification, curses, beatings, imprisonment, death—he will never be cast down, and his passion for the Divine Beauty will but gain in strength. This was what I meant.

Otherwise, woe and misery to the soul that seeketh after comforts, riches, and earthly delights while neglecting to call God to mind! Because calamities encountered in God's pathway are, to 'Abdu'l-Bahá, but favor and grace, and in one of His Tablets the all-glorious Beauty hath declared: "I never passed a tree but Mine heart addressed it saying: 'O would that thou wert cut down in My name, and My body crucified upon thee!'" These were the words of the Most Great Name. This is His path. This is the way to His Realm of Might.

Summary:

The letter encourages the recipient, enamored of the breaths of God, to value and willingly accept ordeals and hardships encountered in exalting the Word of God and loving Him. It emphasizes that trials and calamities are inevitable when walking the path of God. The individual should eagerly welcome these challenges before proceeding with teaching the Faith. The letter conveys that

encountering harassment, reproach, vilification, curses, beatings, imprisonment, or even death should not cast one down, but instead, passion for the Divine Beauty should strengthen.

Key Points:

1. Trials in Exalting the Word of God: The letter addresses the inevitability of trials and calamities when exalting the Word of God.
2. Value and Acceptance of Ordeals: Individuals are advised to value and willingly accept the ordeals and hardships encountered in the path of God.
3. Eagerness in Welcoming Challenges: Before proceeding with teaching the Faith, there is an emphasis on eagerly welcoming the challenges associated with the Divine path.
4. Unshaken Passion for the Divine Beauty: Despite facing harassment, reproach, curses, or physical hardships, the individual should remain unshaken in their passion for the Divine Beauty.
5. God's Path as Favor and Grace: Calamities encountered in God's pathway are viewed as favor and grace. The Most Great Name expresses a deep connection even with inanimate elements, like a tree.

Questions and Answers:

1. Q: What is the advice regarding trials when exalting the Word of God?
- A: Individuals are advised to value and willingly accept the ordeals and hardships encountered in the path of God.
2. Q: What should one eagerly welcome before proceeding with teaching the Faith?
- A: There is an emphasis on eagerly welcoming the challenges and trials associated with the Divine path.
3. Q: How should one respond to hardships encountered in the path of God?*
- A: The individual should remain unshaken in their passion for the Divine Beauty despite facing harassment, reproach, curses, or physical hardships.
4. Q: How does 'Abdu'l-Bahá view calamities encountered in God's pathway?
- A: Calamities encountered in God's pathway are viewed as favor and grace.
5. Q: What deep connection is expressed in the letter regarding inanimate elements?
- A: The Most Great Name expresses a deep connection with even inanimate elements, such as addressing a tree and expressing a desire for it to be cut down in His name.

– 199 –

O ye sincere ones, ye longing ones, ye who are drawn as if magnetized, ye who have risen up to serve the Cause of God, to exalt His Word and scatter His sweet savors far and wide! I have read your excellent letter, beautiful as to style, eloquent as to words, profound as to meaning, and I praised God and thanked Him for having come to your aid and enabled you to serve Him in His widespreading vineyard.

Erelong shall your faces be bright with the radiance of your supplications and your worship of God, your prayers unto Him, and your humility and selflessness in the presence of the friends. He will make of your assemblage a magnet that will draw unto you the bright rays of divine confirmations that shine out from His kingdom of glory.

It is incumbent upon you to ponder in your hearts and meditate upon His words, and humbly to call upon Him, and to put away self in His heavenly Cause. These are the things that will make of you signs of guidance unto all mankind, and brilliant stars shining down from the all-highest horizon, and towering trees in the Abhá Paradise.

Know ye that ‘Abdu’l-Bahá dwelleth in continual delight. To have been lodged in this faraway prison is for me exceeding joy. By the life of Bahá! This prison is my supernal paradise; it is my cherished goal, the comfort of my bosom, the bliss of my heart; it is my refuge, my shelter, my asylum, my safe haven, and within it do I exult amid the hosts of heaven and the Company on high.

Rejoice in my bondage, O ye friends of God, for it soweth the seeds of freedom; rejoice at my imprisonment, for it is the wellspring of salvation; be ye glad on account of my travail, for it leadeth to eternal ease. By the Lord God! I would not exchange this prison for the throne of the whole world, nor give up this confinement for pleasures and pastimes in all the fair gardens on earth. My hope is that out of the Lord’s abundant grace, His munificence and loving-kindness, I may, in His pathway, be hanged against the sky, that my heart may become the target for a thousand bullets, or that I may be cast into the depths of the sea, or be left to perish on desert sands. This is what I long for most; this is my supreme desire; it refresheth my soul, it is balm for my breast, it is the very solace of mine eyes.

As for you, O ye lovers of God, make firm your steps in His Cause, with such resolve that ye shall not be shaken though the direst of calamities assail the world. By nothing, under no conditions, be ye perturbed. Be ye anchored fast as the high mountains, be stars that dawn over the horizon of life, be bright lamps in the gatherings of unity, be souls humble and lowly in the presence of the friends, be innocent in heart. Be ye symbols of guidance and lights of godliness, severed from the world, clinging to the handhold that is sure and strong, spreading abroad the spirit of life, riding the Ark of salvation. Be ye daysprings of generosity, dawning-points of the mysteries of existence, sites where inspiration alighteth, rising-places of splendors, souls that are sustained by the Holy Spirit, enamored of the Lord, detached from all save Him, holy above the characteristics of humankind, clothed in the attributes of the angels of heaven, that ye may win for yourselves the highest bestowal of all, in this new time, this wondrous age.

By the life of Bahá! Only he who is severed from the world shall achieve this ultimate grace, he who is a captive of divine love, empty of passion and self, from every aspect true unto his God, humble, lowly, supplicating, in tears, submissive in the presence of the Lord.

Summary:

The letter addresses sincere and devoted individuals who have risen to serve the Cause of God. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá expresses joy upon reading their letter and acknowledges the divine confirmations upon their efforts. The recipients are urged to ponder His words, call upon God humbly, and put away self in His heavenly Cause. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá assures them that their assemblage will become a magnet for divine confirmations, guiding mankind like brilliant stars in the Abhá Paradise. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá shares his delight in imprisonment, considering it a supernal paradise and expressing a desire for further trials in the path of God. The recipients are encouraged to rejoice in his bondage, for it sows seeds of freedom, leads to salvation, and refreshes his soul. They are urged to make

firm their steps in the Cause, remaining steadfast in the face of calamities, anchored like mountains, and spreading the spirit of life.

Key Points:

1. **Joyful Acknowledgment:** ‘Abdu’l-Bahá expresses joy and gratitude to God for enabling the recipients to serve in His vineyard.
2. **Divine Confirmations:** The recipients are promised divine confirmations as they ponder His words, pray humbly, and selflessly serve in the Cause.
3. **Assemblage as a Magnet:** The assemblage is described as a magnet attracting divine confirmations and shining as brilliant stars in the Abhá Paradise.
4. **Delight in Imprisonment:** ‘Abdu’l-Bahá declares his delight in imprisonment, considering it a supernal paradise, and expresses a desire for further trials in the path of God.
5. **Encouragement for Steadfastness:** Recipients are encouraged to rejoice in trials, make firm steps in the Cause, remain steadfast in calamities, and be anchored like mountains.

Questions and Answers:

1. Q: What does ‘Abdu’l-Bahá express upon reading the recipients' letter?
- A: ‘Abdu’l-Bahá expresses joy and thanks to God for enabling the recipients to serve in His vineyard.
2. Q: How does ‘Abdu’l-Bahá describe the recipients' assemblage?
- A: The assemblage is described as a magnet attracting divine confirmations and shining as brilliant stars in the Abhá Paradise.
3. Q: What does ‘Abdu’l-Bahá express regarding his imprisonment?
- A: ‘Abdu’l-Bahá expresses delight in imprisonment, considering it a supernal paradise, and expresses a desire for further trials in the path of God.
4. Q: What qualities are recipients urged to embody in the face of calamities?
- A: Recipients are urged to make firm steps in the Cause, remain steadfast like mountains in calamities, and spread the spirit of life.
5. Q: How does ‘Abdu’l-Bahá characterize the ultimate grace achievable?
- A: The ultimate grace is achieved by those severed from the world, captives of divine love, humble, and submissive to God.

– 200 –

O my spiritual loved ones! At a time when an ocean of trials and tribulations was surging up and flinging its waves to the heavens, when multitudes were assailing us and the tyrannical were inflicting upon us crushing wrongs—at such a time a band of individuals, intent on defaming us, allied themselves with our unkind brother, brought out a treatise that was filled with slanderous charges, and leveled accusations and calumnies against us.

In this way they alarmed and confused the government authorities, and it is obvious what the condition of this captive then became, in this dilapidated fortress, and what terrible harm and mischief was done, far worse than words can tell. In spite of everything, this homeless prisoner remained inwardly tranquil and secure, trusting in the peerless Lord, yearning for whatever

afflictions might have to be encountered in the pathway of God's love. For bolts of hate are, in our sight, but a gift of pearls from Him, and mortal poison but a healing draught.

Such was our state when a letter came to us from the American friends.¹ They had covenanted together, so they wrote, to remain at one in all things, and the signatories one and all had pledged themselves to make sacrifices in the pathway of the love of God, thus to achieve eternal life. At the very moment when this letter was read, together with the signatures at its close, 'Abdu'l-Bahá experienced a joy so vehement that no pen can describe it, and thanked God that friends have been raised up in that country who will live together in perfect harmony, in the best of fellowship, in full agreement, closely knit, united in their efforts.

The more this compact is reinforced, the happier and the better shall all things be, for it will draw unto itself the confirmations of God. If the lovers of the Lord are hoping for grace to win as their friends the Company on high, they must do all they can to strengthen this compact, for such an alliance for brotherhood and unity is even as watering the Tree of Life: it is life everlasting.

O ye lovers of God! Make firm your steps; fulfill your pledge to one another; go forth in harmony to scatter abroad the sweet savors of God's love, and to establish His Teachings, until ye breathe a soul into the dead body of this world, and bring true healing in the physical and spiritual realms to everyone who aileth.

O ye lovers of God! The world is even as a human being who is diseased and impotent, whose eyes can see no longer, whose ears have gone deaf, all of whose powers are corroded and used up. Wherefore must the friends of God be competent physicians who, following the holy Teachings, will nurse this patient back to health. Perhaps, God willing, the world will mend, and become permanently whole, and its exhausted faculties will be restored, and its person will take on such vigor, freshness and verdancy that it will shine out with comeliness and grace.

The first remedy of all is to guide the people aright, so that they will turn themselves unto God, and listen to His counselings, and go forth with hearing ears and seeing eyes. Once this speedily effective draught is given them, then, in accordance with the Teachings, they must be led to acquire the characteristics and the behavior of the Concourse on high, and encouraged to seek out all the bounties of the Abhá Realm. They must cleanse their hearts from even the slightest trace of hatred and spite, and they must set about being truthful and honest, conciliatory and loving to all humankind—so that East and West will, even as two lovers, hold each other close; that hatred and hostility will perish from the earth, and universal peace be firmly rooted in their place.

O ye lovers of God! Be kind to all peoples; care for every person; do all ye can to purify the hearts and minds of men; strive ye to gladden every soul. To every meadow be a shower of grace, to every tree the water of life; be as sweet musk to the sense of humankind, and to the ailing be a fresh, restoring breeze. Be pleasing waters to all those who thirst, a careful guide to all who have lost their way; be father and mother to the orphan, be loving sons and daughters to the old, be an abundant treasure to the poor. Think ye of love and good fellowship as the delights of heaven, think ye of hostility and hatred as the torments of hell.

Indulge not your bodies with rest, but work with all your souls, and with all your hearts cry out and beg of God to grant you His succor and grace. Thus may ye make this world the Abhá Paradise, and this globe of earth the parade ground of the realm on high. If only ye exert the effort, it is certain that these splendors will shine out, these clouds of mercy will shed down their rain, these life-giving winds will rise and blow, this sweet-smelling musk will be scattered far and wide.

O ye lovers of God! Do not dwell on what is coming to pass in this holy place, and be ye in no wise alarmed. Whatsoever may happen is for the best, because affliction is but the essence of

bounty, and sorrow and toil are mercy unalloyed, and anguish is peace of mind, and to make a sacrifice is to receive a gift, and whatsoever may come to pass hath issued from God's grace.

See ye, therefore, to your own tasks: guide ye the people and educate them in the ways of 'Abdu'l-Bahá. Deliver to mankind this joyous message from the Abhá Realm. Rest not, by day or night; seek ye no moment's peace. Strive ye with all your might to bring to men's ears these happy tidings. In your love for God and your attachment to 'Abdu'l-Bahá, accept ye every tribulation, every sorrow. Endure the aggressor's taunts, put up with the enemy's reproaches. Follow in the footsteps of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, and in the pathway of the Abhá Beauty, long at every moment to give up your lives. Shine out like the daystar, be unresting as the sea; even as the clouds of heaven, shed ye life upon field and hill, and like unto April winds, blow freshness through those human trees, and bring them to their blossoming.

Summary:

This letter from 'Abdu'l-Bahá addresses a time of trials and tribulations when false accusations were made against the Bahá'í community, leading to harmful consequences. Despite these challenges, 'Abdu'l-Bahá finds joy in a letter from American friends pledging unity and sacrifice. He emphasizes the importance of their covenant and encourages the friends to strengthen it for the betterment of the world. The letter emphasizes the role of Bahá'ís as healers of a spiritually and

physically ailing world, urging them to guide people towards God, embody the characteristics of the Abhá Realm, and work for universal peace.

Key Points:

1. **Trials and False Accusations:** The letter describes a period of trials and false accusations against the Bahá'í community, causing harm and confusion.
2. **Joyful Covenant of Unity:** 'Abdu'l-Bahá expresses joy upon receiving a letter from American friends pledging unity, sacrifice, and harmonious living, considering it a source of great delight.
3. **Importance of Covenant:** The covenant among the friends is emphasized as a means to draw divine confirmations, with 'Abdu'l-Bahá suggesting that the more it is reinforced, the happier and better all things will be.
4. **Role of Bahá'ís as Healers:** Bahá'ís are likened to competent physicians for the ailing world, tasked with guiding people to God, embodying divine characteristics, and fostering unity and love among diverse populations.
5. **Guidance for Action:** Bahá'ís are urged to make firm their steps, fulfill pledges to one another, work harmoniously, and strive to bring healing to a spiritually and physically ailing world.

Questions and Answers:

1. Q: What was the reaction to the false accusations and trials mentioned in the letter?
- A: Despite facing trials and false accusations, 'Abdu'l-Bahá remained inwardly tranquil and secure, trusting in God's love.
2. Q: What brought 'Abdu'l-Bahá great delight during this challenging time?
- A: A letter from American friends pledging unity, sacrifice, and harmonious living brought 'Abdu'l-Bahá great delight.
3. Q: What is emphasized as the remedy for the ailing world?
- A: The importance of guiding people to God, embodying divine characteristics, and fostering unity and love among diverse populations is emphasized as the remedy for the ailing world.
4. Q: What metaphor does 'Abdu'l-Bahá use to describe the world and its potential for transformation?
- A: The world is described as a diseased and impotent human being that, with proper care, can be nursed back to health.
5. Q: What is the main call to action for the Bahá'ís in this letter?
- A: Bahá'ís are urged to guide people towards God, embody divine characteristics, work harmoniously, and strive to bring healing to a spiritually and physically ailing world.

O thou who art carried away by the love of God! The Sun of Truth hath risen above the horizon of this world and cast down its beams of guidance. Eternal grace is never interrupted, and a fruit of

that everlasting grace is universal peace. Rest thou assured that in this era of the spirit, the Kingdom of Peace will raise up its tabernacle on the summits of the world, and the commandments of the Prince of Peace will so dominate the arteries and nerves of every people as to draw into His sheltering shade all the nations on earth. From springs of love and truth and unity will the true Shepherd give His sheep to drink.

O handmaid of God, peace must first be established among individuals, until it leadeth in the end to peace among nations. Wherefore, O ye Bahá'ís, strive ye with all your might to create, through the power of the Word of God, genuine love, spiritual communion and durable bonds among individuals. This is your task.

Summary:

This message implores the reader, a lover of God, to recognize the dawn of the Sun of Truth and the guidance it brings. It asserts that eternal grace will lead to universal peace, and in the era of the spirit, the Kingdom of Peace will be established worldwide. The central theme is the importance

of establishing peace among individuals through genuine love, spiritual communion, and lasting bonds, emphasizing that this is the primary task of the Bahá'ís.

Key Points:

1. **Sun of Truth and Eternal Grace:** The letter references the rising of the Sun of Truth, symbolizing divine guidance, and eternal grace that results in universal peace.
2. **Establishment of the Kingdom of Peace:** It predicts the establishment of the Kingdom of Peace globally, where the commandments of the Prince of Peace will unite all nations under its shelter.
3. **The Role of Individuals:** Individuals are called upon to establish peace within themselves, leading to peace among nations.
4. **Task of the Bahá'ís:** Bahá'ís are assigned the task of striving with all their might to foster genuine love, spiritual communion, and durable bonds among individuals through the power of the Word of God.

Questions and Answers:

1. Q: What is the central theme of the message?
- A: The central theme is the importance of establishing peace among individuals through genuine love, spiritual communion, and lasting bonds.
2. Q: How is the Sun of Truth symbolized in the letter?
- A: The Sun of Truth is portrayed as having risen above the horizon of the world, symbolizing divine guidance.
3. Q: What is predicted regarding the Kingdom of Peace in the letter?
- A: The establishment of the Kingdom of Peace globally is predicted, with the commandments of the Prince of Peace uniting all nations.
4. Q: What is the role of individuals in the process of establishing peace?
- A: Individuals are urged to establish peace within themselves first, leading to peace among nations.
5. Q: What task is assigned to the Bahá'ís in the letter?
- A: Bahá'ís are assigned the task of striving to create genuine love, spiritual communion, and durable bonds among individuals through the power of the Word of God.

– 202 –

O ye lovers of truth, ye servants of humankind! Out of the flowering of your thoughts and hopes, fragrant emanations have come my way, wherefore an inner sense of obligation compelleth me to pen these words.

Ye observe how the world is divided against itself, how many a land is red with blood and its very dust is caked with human gore. The fires of conflict have blazed so high that never in early times, not in the Middle Ages, not in recent centuries hath there ever been such a hideous war, a war that is even as millstones, taking for grain the skulls of men. Nay, even worse, for flourishing

countries have been reduced to rubble, cities have been leveled with the ground, and many a once prosperous village hath been turned into ruin. Fathers have lost their sons, and sons their fathers. Mothers have wept away their hearts over dead children. Children have been orphaned, women left to wander, vagrants without a home. From every aspect, humankind hath sunken low. Loud are the piercing cries of fatherless children; loud the mothers' anguished voices, reaching to the skies.

And the breeding ground of all these tragedies is prejudice: prejudice of race and nation, of religion, of political opinion; and the root cause of prejudice is blind imitation of the past—imitation in religion, in racial attitudes, in national bias, in politics. So long as this aping of the past persisteth, just so long will the foundations of the social order be blown to the four winds, just so long will humanity be continually exposed to direst peril.

Now, in such an illumined age as ours, when realities previously unknown to man have been laid bare, and the secrets of created things have been disclosed, and the Morn of Truth hath broken and lit up the world—is it admissible that men should be waging a frightful war that is bringing humanity down to ruin? No, by the Lord God!

Christ Jesus summoned all mankind to amity and peace. Unto Peter He said: "Put up thy sword into the sheath."¹ Such was the bidding and counsel of the Lord Christ; and yet today the Christians one and all have drawn their swords from out the scabbard. How wide is the discrepancy between such acts and the clear Gospel text!

Sixty years ago Bahá'u'lláh rose up, even as the Daystar, over Persia. He declared that the skies of the world were dark, that this darkness boded evil, and that terrible wars would come. From the prison at 'Akká, He addressed the German Emperor in the clearest of terms, telling him that a great war was on the way and that his city of Berlin would break forth in lamentation and wailing. Likewise did He write to the Turkish sovereign, although He was that Sultán's victim and a captive in his prison—that is, He was being held prisoner in the Fortress at 'Akká—and clearly stated that Constantinople would be overtaken by a sudden and radical change, so great that the women and children of that city would mourn and cry aloud. In brief, He addressed such words to all the monarchs and the presidents, and everything came to pass, exactly as He had foretold.

There have issued, from His mighty Pen, various teachings for the prevention of war, and these have been scattered far and wide.

The first is the independent investigation of truth; for blind imitation of the past will stunt the mind. But once every soul inquireth into truth, society will be freed from the darkness of continually repeating the past.

His second principle is the oneness of mankind: that all men are the sheep of God, and God is their loving Shepherd, caring most tenderly for all without favoring one or another. "No difference canst thou see in the creation of the God of mercy;"² all are His servants, all implore His grace.

His third teaching is that religion is a mighty stronghold, but that it must engender love, not malevolence and hate. Should it lead to malice, spite, and hate, it is of no value at all. For religion is a remedy, and if the remedy bring on disease, then put it aside. Again, as to religious, racial, national and political bias: all these prejudices strike at the very root of human life; one and all they beget bloodshed, and the ruination of the world. So long as these prejudices survive, there will be continuous and fearsome wars.

To remedy this condition there must be universal peace. To bring this about, a Supreme Tribunal must be established, representative of all governments and peoples; questions both national and international must be referred thereto, and all must carry out the decrees of this Tribunal. Should any government or people disobey, let the whole world arise against that government or people.

Yet another of the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh is the equality of men and women and their equal sharing in all rights. And there are many similar principles. It hath now become evident that these teachings are the very life and soul of the world.

Ye who are servants of the human race, strive ye with all your heart to deliver mankind out of this darkness and these prejudices that belong to the human condition and the world of nature, so that humanity may find its way into the light of the world of God.

Praise be to Him, ye are acquainted with the various laws, institutions and principles of the world; today nothing short of these divine teachings can assure peace and tranquillity to mankind. But for these teachings, this darkness shall never vanish, these chronic diseases shall never be healed; nay, they shall grow fiercer from day to day. The Balkans will remain discontented. Its restlessness will increase. The vanquished Powers will continue to agitate. They will resort to every measure that may rekindle the flame of war. Movements, newly born and worldwide in their range, will exert their utmost effort for the advancement of their designs. The Movement of the Left will acquire great importance. Its influence will spread.

Strive ye, therefore, with the help of God, with illumined minds and hearts and a strength born of heaven, to become a bestowal from God to man, and to call into being for all humankind, comfort and peace.

Summary:

This message implores lovers of truth and servants of humankind to address the world's division, war, and suffering caused by prejudice and blind imitation of the past. It emphasizes that divine teachings, such as independent investigation of truth, the oneness of mankind, and equality of men and women, are essential for achieving universal peace. The guidance of Bahá'u'lláh, including

foretelling future events and prescribing remedies for societal ailments, is highlighted as a source of illumination for the world.

Key Points:

1. **World in Conflict:** The message vividly describes the global conflict, the devastating consequences of war, and the tragic impact on families, highlighting prejudice as the breeding ground for these tragedies.
2. **Bahá'u'lláh's Guidance:** The guidance of Bahá'u'lláh is emphasized, indicating His foresight in predicting events such as wars and upheavals, along with His teachings on preventing war.
3. **Teachings for Prevention of War:** Key principles for preventing war include the independent investigation of truth, the oneness of mankind, and religion as a source of love rather than hate.
4. **Universal Peace:** The establishment of universal peace is presented as a remedy, calling for a Supreme Tribunal representative of all governments and peoples, with disobedience met by collective action from the world.
5. **Equality of Men and Women:** The equality of men and women is highlighted as a key principle, along with the necessity of delivering humanity from prejudice and darkness through divine teachings.

Questions and Answers:

1. Q: What are the consequences of prejudice and blind imitation according to the message?
- A: The consequences include war, bloodshed, and the ruination of the world, striking at the root of human life.
2. Q: What did Bahá'u'lláh predict in relation to future events and world upheavals?
- A: Bahá'u'lláh predicted events such as wars and upheavals, including foretelling the fate of cities like Berlin and Constantinople.
3. Q: What principles are emphasized for preventing war in the message?
- A: The independent investigation of truth, the oneness of mankind, and religion fostering love rather than hate are key principles.
4. Q: What is the remedy for the chronic diseases and darkness described in the message?
- A: The establishment of universal peace through divine teachings, including the formation of a Supreme Tribunal and adherence to its decrees.
5. Q: What role does equality of men and women play in achieving peace according to the message?
- A: The equality of men and women is presented as one of the teachings that constitute the very life and soul of the world and are essential for the tranquility of mankind.

O thou who art enamored of the Covenant! The Blessed Beauty hath promised this servant that souls would be raised up who would be the very embodiments of guidance, and banners of the Concourse on high, torches of God's oneness, and stars of His pure truth, shining in the heavens where God reigneth alone. They would give sight to the blind, and would make the deaf to hear; they would raise the dead to life. They would confront all the peoples of the earth, pleading their Cause with proofs of the Lord of the seven spheres.

It is my hope that in His bounty He will soon raise up these souls, that His Cause may be exalted. The lodestone which will attract this grace is staunchness in the Covenant. Render thou thanks unto God that thou art firmest of the firm.

O my God, aid Thou Thy servant to raise up the Word, and to refute what is vain and false, to establish the truth, to spread the sacred verses abroad, reveal the splendors, and make the morning's light to dawn in the hearts of the righteous.

Thou art verily the Generous, the Forgiving.

Summary:

The message addresses the recipient, expressing the promise of souls who will embody divine guidance and act as banners of the celestial Concourse. Staunchness in the Covenant is emphasized

as the key to attracting divine grace. The supplication calls for divine assistance in spreading the Word, refuting falsehood, and establishing the truth.

Key Points:

1. **Promised Souls:** The Blessed Beauty promises the emergence of souls embodying guidance, carrying the banner of the Concourse, and demonstrating God's oneness.
2. **Roles of the Promised Souls:** The envisioned souls would perform miracles, such as giving sight to the blind, making the deaf hear, and raising the dead to life.
3. **Missionary Task:** These souls would confront all peoples, presenting the Cause with proofs of the Lord of the seven spheres.
4. **Staunchness in the Covenant:** Firmness in the Covenant is highlighted as the lodestone attracting divine grace and ensuring the elevation of the Cause.
5. **Supplication for Assistance:** The prayer seeks God's aid for the recipient in raising up the Word, refuting falsehood, spreading sacred verses, and revealing divine splendors.

Questions and Answers:

1. Q: What is the promise mentioned in the message?
- A: The promise is about the emergence of souls embodying guidance, acting as banners of the Concourse, and demonstrating God's oneness.
2. Q: What miraculous tasks are attributed to the promised souls?
- A: Tasks include giving sight to the blind, making the deaf hear, and raising the dead to life.
3. Q: What is emphasized as the key to attracting divine grace in the message?
- A: Staunchness in the Covenant is emphasized as the lodestone attracting divine grace.
4. Q: What is the envisioned role of the promised souls concerning the Cause?
- A: They are expected to confront all peoples, presenting the Cause with proofs of the Lord of the seven spheres.
5. Q: What does the supplication seek divine assistance for in the message?
- A: The supplication seeks God's aid for the recipient in tasks such as raising up the Word, refuting falsehood, spreading sacred verses, and revealing divine splendors.

– 204 –

O phoenix of that immortal flame kindled in the sacred Tree! Bahá'u'lláh—may my life, my soul, my spirit be offered up as a sacrifice unto His lowly servants—hath, during His last days on earth, given the most emphatic promise that, through the outpourings of the grace of God and the aid and assistance vouchsafed from His Kingdom on high, souls will arise and holy beings appear who, as stars, would adorn the firmament of divine guidance; illumine the dayspring of loving-kindness and bounty; manifest the signs of the unity of God; shine with the light of sanctity and purity; receive their full measure of divine inspiration; raise high the sacred torch of faith; stand firm as

the rock and immovable as the mountain; and grow to become luminaries in the heavens of His Revelation, mighty channels of His grace, means for the bestowal of God's bountiful care, heralds calling forth the name of the One true God, and establishers of the world's supreme foundation.

These shall labor ceaselessly, by day and by night, shall heed neither trials nor woe, shall suffer no respite in their efforts, shall seek no repose, shall disregard all ease and comfort, and, detached and unsullied, shall consecrate every fleeting moment of their lives to the diffusion of the divine fragrance and the exaltation of God's holy Word. Their faces will radiate heavenly gladness, and their hearts be filled with joy. Their souls will be inspired, and their foundation stand secure. They shall scatter in the world, and travel throughout all regions. They shall raise their voices in every assembly, and adorn and revive every gathering. They shall speak in every tongue, and interpret every hidden meaning. They shall reveal the mysteries of the Kingdom, and manifest unto everyone the signs of God. They shall burn brightly even as a candle in the heart of every assembly, and beam forth as a star upon every horizon. The gentle breezes wafted from the garden of their hearts shall perfume and revive the souls of men, and the revelations of their minds, even as showers, will reinvigorate the peoples and nations of the world.

I am waiting, eagerly waiting for these holy ones to appear; and yet, how long will they delay their coming? My prayer and ardent supplication, at eventide and at dawn, is that these shining stars may soon shed their radiance upon the world, that their sacred countenances may be unveiled to mortal eyes, that the hosts of divine assistance may achieve their victory, and the billows of grace, rising from His oceans above, may flow upon all mankind. Pray ye also and supplicate unto Him that through the bountiful aid of the Ancient Beauty these souls may be unveiled to the eyes of the world.

The glory of God rest upon thee, and upon him whose face is illumined with that everlasting light that shineth from His Kingdom of Glory.

Summary:

The message expresses Bahá'u'lláh's promise of the emergence of souls who, as stars, will adorn the firmament of divine guidance. These holy beings are described as channels of God's grace, tirelessly laboring for the diffusion of divine fragrance and the exaltation of God's holy Word. Their faces radiate heavenly gladness, and they will travel globally, revealing the mysteries of the

Kingdom. 'Abdu'l-Bahá ardently awaits their appearance, praying for their swift manifestation and invoking divine assistance for their unveiling.

Key Points:

1. **Promise of Holy Souls:** Bahá'u'lláh promises the emergence of souls who will adorn the firmament of divine guidance.

2. **Attributes of Holy Beings:** Described as stars, these beings will be channels of God's grace, radiant with heavenly gladness.

3. **Ceaseless Labor:** The holy beings will tirelessly labor day and night, heedless of trials or woe, consecrating every moment to the diffusion of divine fragrance.

4. **Global Impact:** They will scatter throughout the world, speaking in every tongue, interpreting hidden meanings, and reviving the souls of men.

5. **Ardent Prayer:** 'Abdu'l-Bahá eagerly awaits their appearance, praying for their swift manifestation, and invoking divine assistance for their unveiling.

Questions and Answers:

1. Q: What promise does Bahá'u'lláh make regarding the emergence of souls?

- A: Bahá'u'lláh promises the emergence of souls who will adorn the firmament of divine guidance.

2. Q: How are these holy beings described in the message?

- A: They are described as stars, channels of God's grace, and radiant with heavenly gladness.

3. Q: What is the attitude of these holy beings towards trials and difficulties?

- A: They are heedless of trials or woe, tirelessly laboring and consecrating every moment to the diffusion of divine fragrance.

4. Q: What global impact are these holy beings expected to have?

- A: They will scatter throughout the world, speaking in every tongue, interpreting hidden meanings, and reviving the souls of men.

5. Q: What does 'Abdu'l-Bahá ardently await and pray for in the message?

- A: 'Abdu'l-Bahá eagerly awaits the appearance of these holy beings, praying for their swift manifestation, and invoking divine assistance for their unveiling.

– 205 –

O ye respected souls! From the continual imitation of ancient and worn-out ways, the world had grown dark as darksome night. The fundamentals of the divine Teachings had passed from memory; their pith and heart had been totally forgotten, and the people were holding on to husks. The nations had, like tattered garments long outworn, fallen into a pitiful condition.

Out of this pitch blackness there dawned the morning splendor of the Teachings of Bahá'u'lláh. He hath dressed the world with a garment new and fair, and that new garment is the principles which have come down from God.

Now the new age is here and creation is reborn. Humanity hath taken on new life. The autumn hath gone by, and the reviving spring is here. All things are now made new. Arts and industries have been reborn, there are new discoveries in science, and there are new inventions; even the details of human affairs, such as dress and personal effects—even weapons—all these have likewise been renewed. The laws and procedures of every government have been revised. Renewal is the order of the day.

And all this newness hath its source in the fresh outpourings of wondrous grace and favor from the Lord of the Kingdom, which have renewed the world. The people, therefore, must be set completely free from their old patterns of thought, that all their attention may be focused upon these new principles, for these are the light of this time and the very spirit of this age.

Unless these Teachings are effectively spread among the people, until the old ways, the old concepts, are gone and forgotten, this world of being will find no peace, nor will it reflect the perfections of the Heavenly Kingdom. Strive ye with all your hearts to make the heedless conscious, to waken those who sleep, to bring knowledge to the ignorant, to make the blind to see, the deaf to hear, and restore the dead to life.

It behooveth you to show forth such power, such endurance, as to astonish all beholders. The confirmations of the Kingdom are with you. Upon you be the glory of the All-Glorious.

Summary:

The message emphasizes the transformation brought by Bahá'u'lláh's Teachings, describing the world's previous state as dark and worn-out. With the dawn of Bahá'u'lláh's Teachings, humanity has been reborn, arts and industries revitalized, and new discoveries made. The call is to free people from old patterns of thought, focusing on these new principles. The renewal originates from

the grace of the Lord of the Kingdom. The imperative is to spread these Teachings widely, dispelling old concepts for a world of peace and reflection of the Heavenly Kingdom.

Key Points:

1. **Previous World State:** The world was in a dark condition, imitating ancient and worn-out ways, with divine Teachings forgotten.

2. **Dawn of Bahá'u'lláh's Teachings:** The Teachings of Bahá'u'lláh brought morning splendor, dressing the world with new principles from God.

3. **Renewal in the New Age:** A new age has arrived; creation is reborn, and humanity has taken on new life with advancements in arts, industries, science, and inventions.

4. **Source of Renewal:** The renewal is attributed to fresh outpourings of grace and favor from the Lord of the Kingdom.

5. **Focus on New Principles:** Attention must be shifted from old patterns to the new principles, considered the light of this time and the spirit of this age.

Questions and Answers:

1. Q: What is the state of the world before the dawn of Bahá'u'lláh's Teachings?

- A: The world was in a dark condition, imitating ancient and worn-out ways, with divine Teachings forgotten.

2. Q: What transformation did Bahá'u'lláh's Teachings bring to the world?

- A: The Teachings brought morning splendor, dressing the world with new principles from God.

3. Q: What aspects of human life have been renewed in the new age?

- A: Arts, industries, science, inventions, and even the details of human affairs have been renewed.

4. Q: What is the source of this renewal?

- A: The renewal is attributed to fresh outpourings of grace and favor from the Lord of the Kingdom.

5. Q: What is the imperative placed upon the people in response to these Teachings?

- A: They are called to spread these Teachings widely, dispelling old concepts for a world of peace and reflection of the Heavenly Kingdom.

– 206 –

Praise be to Him Who hath rent the dark asunder, hath blotted out the night, hath drawn aside the coverings and torn away the veils; Whose light thereupon shone out, Whose signs and tokens were spread abroad, and His mysteries laid bare. Then did His clouds part and loaded down the earth with His bounties and bestowals, and made all things sweet with rain, and caused the fresh greenery of knowledge and the hyacinths of certitude to spring forth and to shake and tremble for joy, till the whole world was scented with the fragrance of His holiness.

Salutations and praise, blessings and glory be upon those divine realities, those sacred windflowers that have come forth out of this supreme bestowal, this flooding grace that hath roared like a clashing sea of gifts and bounties, tossing its waves to the high heavens.

O God, my God! Praise be unto Thee for kindling the fire of divine love in the Holy Tree on the summit of the loftiest mount: that Tree which is “neither of the East nor of the West,”¹ that fire which blazed out till the flame of it soared upward to the Concourse on high, and from it those realities caught the light of guidance, and cried out: “Verily have we perceived a fire on the slope of Mount Sinai.”²

O God, my God! Increase Thou this fire, as day followeth day, till the blast of it setteth in motion all the earth. O Thou, my Lord! Kindle the light of Thy love in every heart, breathe into men’s souls the spirit of Thy knowledge, gladden their breasts with the verses of Thy oneness. Call Thou to life those who dwell in their tombs, warn Thou the prideful, make happiness worldwide, send down Thy crystal waters, and in the assemblage of manifest splendors, pass round that cup which is “tempered at the camphor fountain.”³

Verily, art Thou the Giving, the Forgiving, the Ever-Bestowing. Verily, art Thou the Merciful, the Compassionate.

O ye loved ones of God! The wine-cup of Heaven overfloweth, the banquet of God’s Covenant is bright with festive lights, the dawn of all bestowals is breaking, the gentle winds of grace are blowing, and out of the invisible world come good tidings of bounties and gifts. In flower-spangled meadows hath the divine springtime pitched its tents, and the spiritual are inhaling sweet scents from the Sheba of the spirit, carried their way by the east wind. Now doth the mystic nightingale carol its odes, and buds of inner meaning are bursting into blossoms delicate and fair. The field larks are become the festival’s musicians, and lifting wondrous voices they cry and sing to the melodies of the Company on high, “Blessed are ye! Glad Tidings! Glad Tidings!” And they urge on the revelers of the Abhá Paradise to drink their fill, and they eloquently hold forth upon the celestial tree, and utter their sacred cries. All this, that withered souls who tread the desert of the heedless, and faded ones lost in the sands of unconcern, may come to throbbing life again, and present themselves at the feasts and revels of the Lord God.

Praise be to Him! The renown of His Cause hath reached to east and west, and word of the power of the Abhá Beauty hath quickened north and south. That cry from the American continent is a choir of holiness, that shout from far and near that riseth even to the Company on high is “Yá Bahá’u’l-Abhá!” Now is the east lit up with a glory, and the west rose-sweet, and all the earth is fragrant with ambergris, and the winds that blow over the Holy Shrine are laden with musk. Erelong shall ye see that even the darkest lands are bright, and the continents of Europe and Africa have turned into gardens of flowers, and forests of blossoming trees.

But since the dawning of this Daystar was in Persia, and since from that orient the sun shone upon the west, it is our fondest hope that the flames of love’s fire should blaze ever more vehemently in that land, and that there the splendor of this Holy Faith should grow ever more intense. May the tumult of God’s Cause so shake that land to its foundations, may the spiritual force of His Word so manifest itself, as to make Írán the core and focus of well-being and peace. May rectitude and conciliation, and love and trust, issuing forth from Írán, bring immortality to all on earth. May she raise on the highest summits the banner of public order, of purest spirituality, of universal peace.

O ye loved ones of God! In this, the Bahá’í dispensation, God’s Cause is spirit unalloyed. His Cause belongeth not to the material world. It cometh neither for strife nor war, nor for acts of mischief or of shame; it is neither for quarrelling with other Faiths, nor for conflicts with the

nations. Its only army is the love of God, its only joy the clear wine of His knowledge, its only battle the expounding of the Truth; its one crusade is against the insistent self, the evil promptings of the human heart. Its victory is to submit and yield, and to be selfless is its everlasting glory. In brief, it is spirit upon spirit:

Unless ye must,
Bruise not the serpent in the dust,
How much less wound a man.
And if ye can,
No ant should ye alarm,
Much less a brother harm.

Let all your striving be for this, to become the source of life and immortality, and peace and comfort and joy, to every human soul, whether one known to you or a stranger, one opposed to you or on your side. Look ye not upon the purity or impurity of his nature: look ye upon the all-embracing mercy of the Lord, the light of Whose grace hath embosomed the whole earth and all who dwell thereon, and in the plenitude of Whose bounty are immersed both the wise and the ignorant. Stranger and friend alike are seated at the table of His favor. Even as the believer, the denier who turneth away from God doth at the same time cup his hands and drink from the sea of His bestowals.

It behooveth the loved ones of the Lord to be the signs and tokens of His universal mercy and the embodiments of His own excelling grace. Like the sun, let them cast their rays upon garden and rubbish heap alike, and even as clouds in spring, let them shed down their rain upon flower and thorn. Let them seek but love and faithfulness, let them not follow the ways of unkindness, let their talk be confined to the secrets of friendship and of peace. Such are the attributes of the righteous, such is the distinguishing mark of those who serve His Threshold.

The Abhá Beauty endured the most afflictive of calamities. He bore countless agonies and ills. He enjoyed not a moment's peace, drew not an easeful breath. He wandered, homeless, over desert sands and mountain slopes; He was shut in a fortress, and a prison cell. But to Him, His pauper's mat of straw was an eternal throne of glory, and His heavy chains a sovereign's carcanet. By day, by night, He lived under a whirring sword, and He was ready from moment to moment for death on the cross. He bore all this that He might purify the world, and deck it out with the tender mercies of the Lord God; that He might set it at rest; that conflict and aggression might be put to flight, the lance and the keen blade be exchanged for loving fellowship, malevolence and war turn into safety and gentleness and love, that battlefields of hate and wrath should become gardens of delight, and places where once the blood-drenched armies clashed, be fragrant pleasure grounds; that warfare should be seen as shame, and the resort to arms, even as a loathsome sickness, be shunned by every people; that universal peace raise its pavilions on the loftiest mounts, and war be made to perish forever from the earth.

Wherefore must the loved ones of God, laboriously, with the waters of their striving, tend and nourish and foster this tree of hope. In whatsoever land they dwell, let them with a whole heart befriend and be companions to those who are either close to them, or far removed. Let them, with qualities like unto those of heaven, promote the institutions and the religion of God. Let them never lose heart, never be despondent, never feel afflicted. The more antagonism they meet, the more let them show their own good faith; the more torments and calamities they have to face, the more generously let them pass round the bounteous cup. Such is the spirit which will become the life of

the world, such is the spreading light at its heart: and he who may be and do other than this is not worthy to serve at the Holy Threshold of the Lord.

O ye loved ones of God! The Sun of Truth is shining down from invisible skies; know ye the value of these days. Lift up your heads, and grow ye cypress-tall in these swift-running streams. Take ye joy in the beauty of the narcissus of Najd, for night will fall and it will be no more....

O ye loved ones of God! Praise be to Him, the bright banner of the Covenant is flying higher every day, while the flag of perfidy hath been reversed, and hangeth at half-mast. The benighted attackers have been shaken to their core; they are now as ruined sepulchers, and even as blind creatures that dwell beneath the earth they creep and crawl about a corner of the tomb, and out of that hole, from time to time, like unto savage beasts, do they jibber and howl. Glory be to God! How can the darkness hope to overcome the light, how can a magician's cords hold fast "a serpent plain for all to see"? "Then lo! It swallowed up their lying wonders."⁴ Alas for them! They have deluded themselves with a fable, and to indulge their appetites they have done away with their own selves. They gave up everlasting glory in exchange for human pride, and they sacrificed greatness in both worlds to the demands of the insistent self. This is that of which We have forewarned you. Erelong shall ye behold the foolish in manifest loss.

O my Lord and my Hope! Help Thou Thy loved ones to be steadfast in Thy mighty Covenant, to remain faithful to Thy manifest Cause, and to carry out the commandments Thou didst set down for them in Thy Book of Splendors; that they may become banners of guidance and lamps of the Company above, wellsprings of Thine infinite wisdom, and stars that lead aright, as they shine down from the supernal sky.

Verily art Thou the Invincible, the Almighty, the All-Powerful.

Summary:

The text extols the transformative power of Bahá'u'lláh's teachings, likening it to a dawn breaking upon the world. It expresses gratitude for the divine love kindled by Bahá'u'lláh, invoking prayers for the increase of this fire. The metaphor of a banquet of God's Covenant with festive lights and spiritual scents signifies the abundance of divine blessings. The mention of the spread of the Bahá'í Faith and the hope for Iran to become a source of peace emphasizes the global impact and

aspirations for unity. The text underscores the spiritual essence of God's Cause, urging followers to embody love, selflessness, and universal compassion.

Key Points:

1. **Dawn of Transformation:** The text symbolizes Bahá'u'lláh's teachings as a dawn breaking upon the world, transforming it spiritually.
2. **Banquet of God's Covenant:** Describes the Bahá'í Faith as a banquet bright with festive lights, expressing abundance in divine blessings.
3. **Global Impact:** The Faith's renown has reached east and west, with mentions of spiritual awakening in the American continent and the transformation of Europe and Africa.
4. **Spiritual Essence:** Emphasizes the spiritual essence of God's Cause, calling for selflessness, love, and a focus on the inner qualities of individuals.
5. **Hope for Iran:** Expresses hope for Iran to become a source of peace, invoking prayers for the country to manifest rectitude and conciliation.

Questions and Answers:

1. Q: How is Bahá'u'lláh's teachings symbolized in the text?
- A: The teachings are symbolized as a dawn breaking upon the world, bringing spiritual transformation.
2. Q: What metaphor is used to signify the abundance of divine blessings in the Bahá'í Faith?
- A: The metaphor of a banquet of God's Covenant with festive lights and spiritual scents.
3. Q: What regions are mentioned regarding the spread of the Bahá'í Faith?
- A: The text mentions the renown of the Faith reaching east and west, with specific emphasis on the American continent, Europe, and Africa.
4. Q: What qualities are followers urged to embody in response to God's Cause?
- A: Followers are urged to embody love, selflessness, and universal compassion.
5. Q: What is the expressed hope for Iran in the text?
- A: The hope is for Iran to become a source of peace, manifesting rectitude and conciliation, thereby contributing to global well-being.

O ye who have turned your faces toward the Exalted Beauty! By night, by day, at morningtide and sunset, when darkness draweth on, and at early light I remember, and ever have remembered, in the realms of my mind and heart, the loved ones of the Lord. I beg of Him to bestow His confirmations upon those loved ones, dwellers in that pure and holy land, and to grant them successful outcomes in all things: that in their character, their behavior, their words, their way of life, in all they are and do, He will make them to achieve distinction among men; that He will

gather them into the world community, their hearts filled with ecstasy and fervor and yearning love, with knowledge and certitude, with steadfastness and unity, their faces beauteous and bright.

O ye beloved of the Lord! This day is the day of union, the day of the ingathering of all mankind. “Verily God loveth those who, as though they were a solid wall, do battle for His Cause in serried lines!”¹ Note that He saith “in serried lines”—meaning crowded and pressed together, one locked to the next, each supporting his fellows. To do battle, as stated in the sacred verse, doth not, in this greatest of all dispensations, mean to go forth with sword and spear, with lance and piercing arrow—but rather weaponed with pure intent, with righteous motives, with counsels helpful and effective, with godly attributes, with deeds pleasing to the Almighty, with the qualities of heaven. It signifieth education for all mankind, guidance for all men, the spreading far and wide of the sweet savors of the spirit, the promulgation of God’s proofs, the setting forth of arguments conclusive and divine, the doing of charitable deeds.

Whensoever holy souls, drawing on the powers of heaven, shall arise with such qualities of the spirit, and march in unison, rank on rank, every one of those souls will be even as one thousand, and the surging waves of that mighty ocean will be even as the battalions of the Concourse on high. What a blessing that will be—when all shall come together, even as once separate torrents, rivers and streams, running brooks and single drops, when collected together in one place will form a mighty sea. And to such a degree will the inherent unity of all prevail, that the traditions, rules, customs and distinctions in the fanciful life of these populations will be effaced and vanish away like isolated drops, once the great sea of oneness doth leap and surge and roll.

I swear by the Ancient Beauty, that at such a time overwhelming grace will so encircle all, and the sea of grandeur will so overflow its shores, that the narrowest strip of water will grow wide as an endless sea, and every merest drop will be even as the shoreless deep.

O ye loved ones of God! Struggle and strive to reach that high station, and to make a splendor so to shine across these realms of earth that the rays of it will be reflected back from a dawning-point on the horizon of eternity. This is the very foundation of the Cause of God. This is the very pith of the Law of God. This is the mighty structure raised up by the Manifestations of God. This is why the orb of God’s world dawneth. This is why the Lord establisheth Himself on the throne of His human body.

O ye loved ones of God! See how the Exalted One²—may the souls of all on earth be a ransom for Him—for this high purpose made His blessed heart the target for affliction’s spears; and because the real intent of the Ancient Beauty—for Him may the souls of the Concourse on high be offered up—was to win this same supernal goal, the Exalted One bared His holy breast for a target to a myriad bullets fired by the people of malice and hate, and with utter meekness died the martyr’s death. On the dust of this pathway the holy blood of thousands upon thousands of sacred souls gushed out, and many a time the blessed body of a loyal lover of God was hanged to the gallows tree.

The Abhá Beauty Himself—may the spirit of all existence be offered up for His loved ones—bore all manner of ordeals, and willingly accepted for Himself intense afflictions. No torment was there left that His sacred form was not subjected to, no suffering that did not descend upon Him. How many a night, when He was chained, did He go sleepless because of the weight of His iron collar; how many a day the burning pain of the stocks and fetters gave Him no moment’s peace. From Níyávarán to Tīhrán they made Him run—He, that embodied spirit, He Who had been accustomed to repose against cushions of ornamented silk—chained, shoeless, His head bared; and down under the earth, in the thick darkness of that narrow dungeon, they shut Him up with murderers, rebels and thieves. Ever and again they assailed Him with a new torment, and all were

certain that from one moment to the next He would suffer a martyr's death. After some time they banished Him from His native land, and sent Him to countries alien and far away. During many a year in 'Iráq, no moment passed but the arrow of a new anguish struck His holy heart; with every breath a sword came down upon that sacred body, and He could hope for no moment of security and rest. From every side His enemies mounted their attack with unrelenting hate; and singly and alone He withstood them all. After all these tribulations, these body blows, they flung Him out of 'Iráq in the continent of Asia, to the continent of Europe, and in that place of bitter exile, of wretched hardships, to the wrongs that were heaped upon Him by the people of the Qur'án were now added the virulent persecutions, the powerful attacks, the plottings, the slanders, the continual hostilities, the hate and malice, of the people of the Bayán. My pen is powerless to tell it all; but ye have surely been informed of it. Then, after twenty-four years in this, the Most Great Prison, in agony and sore affliction, His days drew to a close.

To sum it up, the Ancient Beauty was ever, during His sojourn in this transitory world, either a captive bound with chains, or living under a sword, or subjected to extreme suffering and torment, or held in the Most Great Prison. Because of His physical weakness, brought on by His afflictions, His blessed body was worn away to a breath; it was light as a cobweb from long grieving. And His reason for shouldering this heavy load and enduring all this anguish, which was even as an ocean that hurleth its waves to high heaven—His reason for putting on the heavy iron chains and for becoming the very embodiment of utter resignation and meekness, was to lead every soul on earth to concord, to fellow feeling, to oneness; to make known amongst all peoples the sign of the singleness of God, so that at last the primal oneness deposited at the heart of all created things would bear its destined fruit, and the splendor of “No difference canst thou see in the creation of the God of Mercy,”³ would cast abroad its rays.

Now is the time, O ye beloved of the Lord, for ardent endeavor. Struggle ye, and strive. And since the Ancient Beauty was exposed by day and night on the field of martyrdom, let us in our turn labor hard, and hear and ponder the counsels of God; let us fling away our lives, and renounce our brief and numbered days. Let us turn our eyes away from empty fantasies of this world's divergent forms, and serve instead this preeminent purpose, this grand design. Let us not, because of our own imaginings, cut down this tree that the hand of heavenly grace hath planted; let us not, with the dark clouds of our illusions, our selfish interests, blot out the glory that streameth from the Abhá Realm. Let us not be as barriers that wall out the rolling ocean of Almighty God. Let us not prevent the pure, sweet scents from the garden of the All-Glorious Beauty from blowing far and wide. Let us not, on this day of reunion, shut out the vernal downpour of blessings from on high. Let us not consent that the splendors of the Sun of Truth should ever fade and disappear. These are the admonitions of God, as set forth in His Holy Books, His Scriptures, His Tablets that tell out His counselings to the sincere.

The glory rest upon you, and God's mercy, and God's blessings.

Summary:

The text addresses the believers, expressing the 'Abdu'l-Bahá's constant remembrance of them in prayers. 'Abdu'l-Bahá seeks divine confirmations for the loved ones of the Lord, wishing for their success and distinction in character, behavior, and way of life. The central theme emphasizes the transformative power of the Bahá'í teachings, calling for unity, collective effort, and the elimination of distinctions among humanity. The text recounts the sufferings of Bahá'u'lláh and

His sacrifice for the cause of unity, highlighting the purpose of His trials to lead humanity toward oneness.

Key Points:

1. **Prayers for Loved Ones:** 'Abdu'l-Bahá seeks divine confirmations and success for the believers, wishing for their distinction in character and conduct.
2. **Day of Union:** The text describes the current era as a day of union and emphasizes the need for unity among the believers, with a focus on collective effort and mutual support.
3. **Symbolic Battle:** The battle for God's Cause is described metaphorically, emphasizing spiritual attributes over physical combat, calling for education, guidance, and charitable deeds.
4. **Unity Beyond Distinctions:** The text envisions the unity of humanity, likening it to the gathering of rivers into a mighty sea, symbolizing the effacement of artificial distinctions and divisions.
5. **Bahá'u'lláh's Sufferings:** The sufferings of Bahá'u'lláh are recounted, portraying His endurance of afflictions, persecution, and exile for the sake of establishing unity and oneness.

Questions and Answers:

1. Q: What is the central theme of the text?
- A: The central theme revolves around the transformative power of Bahá'í teachings, unity among believers, and the elimination of distinctions in humanity.
2. Q: How is the battle for God's Cause metaphorically described?
- A: The battle is described as a collective effort armed with pure intent, righteous motives, and godly attributes, focusing on education, guidance, and charitable deeds.
3. Q: What is the envisioned outcome of the unity among humanity in the text?
- A: Unity is likened to the gathering of rivers into a mighty sea, symbolizing the effacement of artificial distinctions and the creation of a vast, unified entity.
4. Q: What does the text highlight regarding Bahá'u'lláh's sufferings?
- A: The text recounts Bahá'u'lláh's endurance of afflictions, persecution, and exile, portraying His sacrifices for the establishment of unity and oneness.
5. Q: What is the call to action in the text?
- A: The believers are urged to strive ardently, follow the counsels of God, and dedicate themselves to the grand design of serving the cause of unity.

O ye servants of the Sacred Threshold! The triumphant hosts of the Celestial Concourse, arrayed and marshaled in the Realms above, stand ready and expectant to assist and assure victory to that valiant horseman who with confidence spurs on his charger into the arena of service. Well is it with that fearless warrior, who armed with the power of true Knowledge, hastens unto the field,

disperses the armies of ignorance, and scatters the hosts of error, who holds aloft the Standard of Divine Guidance, and sounds the Clarion of Victory. By the righteousness of the Lord! He hath achieved a glorious triumph and obtained the true victory.

Summary:

This passage calls upon the servants of the Sacred Threshold to be fearless warriors in the arena of service. The Celestial Concourse stands prepared to assist the valiant horseman who, armed with true knowledge, confronts ignorance and error. The victorious warrior holds the Standard of

Divine Guidance, sounding the Clarion of Victory, achieving a glorious triumph through righteousness.

Key Points:

1. Call to Action:

- Servants urged to be fearless warriors in the service of the Sacred Threshold.

2. Celestial Concourse's Support:

- Triumphant hosts in the Celestial Concourse ready to assist and ensure victory.

3. Attributes of the Valiant Horseman:

- The warrior confidently spurs on their charger into the arena.
- Armed with the power of true knowledge.

4. Actions in the Arena:

- Hastening to the field to disperse the armies of ignorance.
- Scattering the hosts of error.

5. Symbols of Victory:

- Holding aloft the Standard of Divine Guidance.
- Sounding the Clarion of Victory.

6. Achievement of Triumph:

- By the righteousness of the Lord, the warrior achieves a glorious triumph.
- True victory is obtained.

Questions with Answers:

1. Q: What is the main call to action in this passage?

- A: The servants are urged to be fearless warriors in the service of the Sacred Threshold.

2. Q: Who stands ready to assist and ensure victory for the valiant horseman?

- A: The triumphant hosts of the Celestial Concourse.

3. Q: What are the attributes of the valiant horseman?

- A: The warrior confidently spurs on their charger into the arena and is armed with the power of true knowledge.

4. Q: What actions does the warrior take in the arena of service?

- A: Hastening to the field to disperse the armies of ignorance and scattering the hosts of error.

5. Q: What symbols represent victory in the passage?

- A: Holding aloft the Standard of Divine Guidance and sounding the Clarion of Victory.

6. Q: How does the warrior achieve triumph and true victory?

- A: By the righteousness of the Lord, the warrior achieves a glorious triumph and obtains true victory.

O ye servants of the Blessed Beauty!... It is clear that in this day, confirmations from the unseen world are encompassing all those who deliver the divine Message. Should the work of teaching lapse, these confirmations would be entirely cut off, since it is impossible for the loved ones of God to receive assistance unless they teach.

Under all conditions, the teaching must be carried forward, but with wisdom. If the work cannot proceed openly, then let them teach in private, and thus engender spirituality and fellowship among the children of men. If, for example, each and every one of the believers would become a true friend to one of the unheeding, and, conducting himself with absolute rectitude, associate with this soul, treat him with the utmost kindness, himself exemplify the divine instructions he hath received, the good qualities and behavior patterns, and at all times act in accord with the admonitions of God—it is certain that little by little he will succeed in awakening that previously heedless individual, and in changing his ignorance to knowledge of the truth.

Souls are inclined toward estrangement. Steps should first be taken to do away with this estrangement, for only then will the Word take effect. If a believer showeth kindness to one of the neglectful, and, with great love, gradually leadeth him to an understanding of the validity of the Holy Cause, so that he may come to know the fundamentals of God's Faith and the implications thereof—such a one will certainly be transformed, excepting only those seldom-encountered individuals who are even as ashes, whose hearts are “hard as rocks, or harder still.”¹

If every one of the friends should strive in this way to guide one soul aright, the number of believers will double every year; and this can be accomplished with prudence and wisdom, and no harm whatever would result therefrom.

Furthermore, the teachers must travel about, and if spreading the Message openly should cause a disturbance, then instead, let them stimulate and train the believers, inspire them, delight them, rejoice their hearts, revive and refresh them with the sweet saviors of holiness.

Summary:

This passage emphasizes the necessity of continuous teaching efforts, highlighting that divine confirmations depend on the active delivery of the Message. Teaching is encouraged, even if done discreetly, to foster spirituality and fellowship among individuals. The importance of personal connections is emphasized, urging believers to exemplify divine instructions and gradually lead others to understand the truth. Overcoming estrangement is crucial, and by showing kindness, believers can transform the previously neglectful. The goal is for each believer to guide one soul

annually, doubling the number of believers. Traveling teachers are advised to inspire and train believers, even if open proclamation of the Message may cause disturbance.

Key Points:

1. Necessity of Teaching:

- Confirmations from the unseen world depend on the active delivery of the divine Message.

2. Teaching with Wisdom:

- Teaching should be carried forward even if done discreetly.
- Wisdom is emphasized in the approach to teaching.

3. Fostering Spirituality:

- Even in private teaching, the aim is to engender spirituality and fellowship among individuals.

4. Importance of Personal Connections:

- Believers are encouraged to become true friends with those who are unheeding.
- Exemplifying divine instructions, good qualities, and behavior patterns is crucial.

5. Transforming Hearts:

- Kindness and gradual guidance can transform neglectful individuals, except for those extremely resistant.

6. Doubling Believers:

- If each believer guides one soul annually, the number of believers will double every year.

7. Traveling Teachers:

- Teachers are encouraged to travel and, if open proclamation causes disturbance, focus on inspiring and training believers.

Questions with Answers:

1. Q: What does this passage stress regarding divine confirmations?

- A: Confirmations from the unseen world depend on the active delivery of the divine Message.

2. Q: How is teaching encouraged to be carried forward?

- A: Even if done discreetly, teaching should be continued with wisdom.

3. Q: What is the aim of private teaching according to the passage?

- A: The aim is to engender spirituality and fellowship among individuals.

4. Q: What is emphasized in personal connections with those who are unheeding?

- A: Exemplifying divine instructions, good qualities, and behavior patterns is crucial.

5. Q: How can neglectful individuals be transformed according to the passage?

- A: Kindness and gradual guidance can transform neglectful individuals, except for those extremely resistant.

6. Q: What goal is suggested for each believer?

- A: Each believer guiding one soul annually, leading to the doubling of believers every year.

7. Q: What is the advice for traveling teachers?

- A: If open proclamation causes disturbance, they are advised to focus on inspiring and training believers.

– 210 –

O ye roses in the garden of God's love! O ye bright lamps in the assemblage of His knowledge! May the soft breathings of God pass over you, may the Glory of God illumine the horizon of your hearts. Ye are the waves of the deep sea of knowledge, ye are the massed armies on the plains of certitude, ye are the stars in the skies of God's compassion, ye are the stones that put the people of perdition to flight, ye are clouds of divine pity over the gardens of life, ye are the abundant grace of God's oneness that is shed upon the essences of all created things.

On the outspread tablet of this world, ye are the verses of His singleness; and atop lofty palace towers, ye are the banners of the Lord. In His bowers are ye the blossoms and sweet-smelling herbs, in the rose garden of the spirit the nightingales that utter plaintive cries. Ye are the birds that soar upward into the firmament of knowledge, the royal falcons on the wrist of God.

Why then are ye quenched, why silent, why leaden and dull? Ye must shine forth like the lightning, and raise up a clamoring like unto the great sea. Like a candle must ye shed your light, and even as the soft breezes of God must ye blow across the world. Even as sweet breaths from heavenly bowers, as musk-laden winds from the gardens of the Lord, must ye perfume the air for the people of knowledge, and even as the splendors shed by the true Sun, must ye illumine the hearts of humankind. For ye are the life-laden winds, ye are the jessamine-scents from the gardens of the saved. Bring then life to the dead, and awaken those who slumber. In the darkness of the world be ye radiant flames; in the sands of perdition, be ye wellsprings of the water of life, be ye guidance from the Lord God. Now is the time to serve, now is the time to be on fire. Know ye the value of this chance, this favorable juncture that is limitless grace, ere it slip from your hands.

Soon will our handful of days, our vanishing life, be gone, and we shall pass, empty-handed, into the hollow that is dug for those who speak no more; wherefore must we bind our hearts to the manifest Beauty, and cling to the lifeline that faileth never. We must gird ourselves for service, kindle love's flame, and burn away in its heat. We must loose our tongues till we set the wide world's heart afire, and with bright rays of guidance blot out the armies of the night, and then, for His sake, on the field of sacrifice, fling down our lives.

Thus let us scatter over every people the treasured gems of the recognition of God, and with the decisive blade of the tongue, and the sure arrows of knowledge, let us defeat the hosts of self and passion, and hasten onward to the site of martyrdom, to the place where we die for the Lord. And then, with flying flags, and to the beat of drums, let us pass into the realm of the All-Glorious, and join the Company on high.

Well is it with the doers of great deeds.

Summary:

Believers are likened to roses in God's garden, lamps in His knowledge, waves in the sea of knowledge, and stars in the skies of God's compassion. They are urged to shine forth, raise a clamor, shed their light, and blow like the soft breezes of God across the world. The analogy of life-laden winds and jessamine-scents signifies their role in bringing life to the dead and awakening

the slumbering. The passage emphasizes the urgency of service, recognizing the fleeting nature of life, and the need to seize the opportunity to spread the recognition of God, defeat the forces of self and passion, and willingly sacrifice for the Lord.

Key Points:

1. Metaphors for Believers:

- Roses in God's love, lamps in His knowledge, waves in the sea of knowledge, stars in the skies of God's compassion.

2. Call to Action:

- Believers are called to shine forth, raise a clamor, shed their light, and blow across the world like the soft breezes of God.

3. Analogies of Life-Laden Winds and Jessamine-Scents:

- Believers are compared to life-laden winds and jessamine-scents, signifying their role in bringing life to the dead and awakening the slumbering.

4. Urgency of Service:

- Urgent call for believers to serve, kindle love's flame, and scatter gems of the recognition of God over every people.

5. Recognition of Life's Fleeting Nature:

- Recognition of the shortness of life and the need to bind hearts to the manifest Beauty before passing into the realm of the unknown.

6. Call to Defeat Forces of Self and Passion:

- Believers are urged to defeat the hosts of self and passion with the decisive blade of the tongue and sure arrows of knowledge.

7. Call to Sacrifice and Martyrdom:

- Believers are called to fling down their lives on the field of sacrifice for the Lord and join the Company on high.

8. Urgency in Seizing the Opportunity:

- Emphasis on seizing the favorable juncture and recognizing the limitless grace before it slips away.

Questions with Answers:

1. Q: How are believers described in the metaphors used in the passage?

- A: They are likened to roses, lamps, waves, and stars, symbolizing their significance in God's creation.

2. Q: What urgent actions are believers called to take?

- A: They are urged to shine forth, raise a clamor, shed their light, and blow across the world like the soft breezes of God.

3. Q: What is the significance of believers being compared to life-laden winds and jessamine-scents?

- A: It signifies their role in bringing life to the dead and awakening the slumbering.

4. Q: What recognition about life does the passage emphasize?

- A: The shortness of life and the need to bind hearts to the manifest Beauty before passing into the unknown.

5. Q: What is the call regarding the forces of self and passion?

- A: Believers are urged to defeat the hosts of self and passion with the decisive blade of the tongue and sure arrows of knowledge.

– 211 –

When the friends do not endeavor to spread the message, they fail to remember God befittingly, and will not witness the tokens of assistance and confirmation from the Abhá Kingdom nor comprehend the divine mysteries. However, when the tongue of the teacher is engaged in teaching, he will naturally himself be stimulated, will become a magnet attracting the divine aid and bounty of the Kingdom, and will be like unto the bird at the hour of dawn, which itself becometh exhilarated by its own singing, its warbling and its melody.

Summary:

The passage emphasizes the vital role of actively spreading the message in maintaining a fitting remembrance of God. It suggests that engagement in teaching acts as a catalyst, drawing divine assistance and understanding of divine mysteries. The analogy of a bird at dawn highlights the

reciprocal nature of teaching, where the teacher, like the bird, becomes invigorated through the act itself.

Key Points:

1. Importance of Spreading the Message:

- Failure to actively spread the message leads to a lack of befitting remembrance of God.

2. Stimulation through Teaching:

- Engaging in teaching acts as a stimulant for the teacher.

3. Magnet for Divine Aid:

- The teacher becomes a magnet, drawing divine assistance and bounty.

4. Analogy of the Bird at Dawn:

- The teacher, like the bird at dawn, is invigorated by the act of teaching.

Questions with Answers:

1. Q: What is the consequence of not actively spreading the message according to the passage?

- A: It leads to a failure in remembering God befittingly.

2. Q: How does engagement in teaching affect the teacher?

- A: It stimulates and invigorates the teacher, acting like a magnet.

3. Q: What does the passage suggest about divine assistance?

- A: Actively spreading the message draws divine assistance and bounty.

4. Q: What analogy is used to describe the teacher's experience during teaching?

- A: The analogy of a bird at dawn is used, highlighting the invigorating nature of the teaching act.

5. Q: What reciprocal relationship is emphasized in the passage?

- A: The teacher, like the bird, becomes exhilarated through the act of teaching, creating a reciprocal relationship between the teacher and the teaching process.

– 212 –

It is at such times that the friends of God avail themselves of the occasion, seize the opportunity, rush forth and win the prize. If their task is to be confined to good conduct and advice, nothing will be accomplished. They must speak out, expound the proofs, set forth clear arguments, draw irrefutable conclusions establishing the truth of the manifestation of the Sun of Reality.

Summary:

The passage underscores the necessity for proactive engagement by the friends of God during opportune moments. Mere good conduct and advice are deemed insufficient; the friends are urged

to speak out, present clear arguments, and expound proofs, establishing the truth of the manifestation of the Sun of Reality.

Key Points:

1. Utilizing Opportunities:

- Emphasis on the importance of seizing occasions and winning the prize.

2. Proactive Engagement:

- Mere good conduct and advice are insufficient for accomplishing the task.

3. Speaking Out:

- Advocacy for actively speaking out and expressing beliefs.

4. Expounding Proofs:

- The need to present clear arguments and draw irrefutable conclusions.

5. Establishing Truth:

- The ultimate goal is to establish the truth of the manifestation of the Sun of Reality.

Questions with Answers:

1. Q: What is stressed regarding the conduct of the friends of God during opportune moments?

- A: They should avail themselves of the occasion and actively engage to win the prize.

2. Q: Why does the passage deem good conduct and advice alone insufficient?

- A: Mere good conduct and advice won't accomplish the necessary task.

3. Q: What is the advocated action for the friends of God?

- A: They are urged to speak out, expressing their beliefs.

4. Q: What is emphasized regarding the presentation of beliefs?

- A: The friends should expound proofs, set forth clear arguments, and draw irrefutable conclusions.

5. Q: What is the ultimate goal according to the passage?

- A: The ultimate goal is to establish the truth of the manifestation of the Sun of Reality through proactive engagement and expression of beliefs.

The teaching work should under all conditions be actively pursued by the believers because divine confirmations are dependent upon it. Should a Bahá'í refrain from being fully, vigorously and wholeheartedly involved in the teaching work he will undoubtedly be deprived of the blessings of the Abhá Kingdom. Even so, this activity should be tempered with wisdom—not that wisdom which requireth one to be silent and forgetful of such an obligation, but rather that which requireth one to display divine tolerance, love, kindness, patience, a goodly character, and holy deeds. In brief, encourage the friends individually to teach the Cause of God and draw their attention to this meaning of wisdom mentioned in the Writings, which is itself the essence of teaching the Faith—

but all this to be done with the greatest tolerance, so that heavenly assistance and divine confirmation may aid the friends.

Summary:

The passage stresses the active pursuit of the teaching work by Bahá'ís as it is essential for receiving divine confirmations. However, this activity should be balanced with wisdom, emphasizing divine tolerance, love, kindness, patience, good character, and holy deeds. Encouraging individual efforts in teaching the Cause of God is paramount, and the essence of

wisdom in the Writings should be understood. Tolerance is highlighted to ensure heavenly assistance and divine confirmation.

Key Points:

1. Active Pursuit of Teaching:

- Believers are urged to actively engage in the teaching work for divine confirmations.

2. Wisdom in Teaching:

- Wisdom is emphasized, not as silence or neglect, but as divine tolerance, love, kindness, patience, good character, and holy deeds.

3. Balanced Approach:

- Teaching should be pursued with wisdom and tolerance, avoiding extremes.

4. Encouraging Individual Efforts:

- Individual efforts in teaching the Cause of God are crucial.

5. Essence of Wisdom in the Writings:

- Understanding the essence of wisdom in the Writings is key to effective teaching.

6. Tolerance for Divine Assistance:

- Tolerance is highlighted to ensure heavenly assistance and divine confirmation in the teaching efforts.

Questions with Answers:

1. Q: Why is active engagement in the teaching work emphasized for Bahá'ís?

- A: It is essential for receiving divine confirmations.

2. Q: How is wisdom in teaching defined in the passage?

- A: It involves divine tolerance, love, kindness, patience, good character, and holy deeds.

3. Q: What should be the approach to teaching according to the passage?

- A: It should be balanced with wisdom, avoiding extremes.

4. Q: What is crucial in the teaching work?

- A: Encouraging individual efforts in teaching the Cause of God.

5. Q: What is emphasized regarding the understanding of wisdom in the Writings?

- A: Understanding the essence of wisdom in the Writings is crucial for effective teaching.

6. Q: Why is tolerance highlighted in the passage?

- A: Tolerance is crucial to ensure heavenly assistance and divine confirmation in teaching efforts.

Follow thou the way of thy Lord, and say not that which the ears cannot bear to hear, for such speech is like luscious food given to small children. However palatable, rare and rich the food may

be, it cannot be assimilated by the digestive organs of a suckling child. Therefore unto every one who hath a right, let his settled measure be given.

“Not everything that a man knoweth can be disclosed, nor can everything that he can disclose be regarded as timely, nor can every timely utterance be considered as suited to the capacity of those who hear it.” Such is the consummate wisdom to be observed in thy pursuits. Be not oblivious thereof, if thou wishest to be a man of action under all conditions. First diagnose the disease and identify the malady, then prescribe the remedy, for such is the perfect method of the skilful physician.

Summary:

The passage advises following the way of the Lord, cautioning against speaking beyond the capacity of the listener. Analogously, not all knowledge can be shared, and even timely disclosure

may not suit the audience's capacity. The consummate wisdom lies in discerning the right measure, akin to a skilled physician diagnosing before prescribing.

Key Points:

1. Guidance on Speech:

- Advocates following the Lord's way in speech.
- Warns against utterances beyond the capacity of listeners.

2. Limitations of Disclosures:

- Emphasizes that not all knowledge can be disclosed.
- Acknowledges the limitation in sharing information.

3. Timeliness in Speech:

- Highlights that not every timely utterance is suitable for all audiences.
- Stresses the importance of considering the capacity of the listeners.

4. Perfect Method:

- Recommends a perfect method akin to a skilled physician's approach.
- Identifies diagnosing the disease, understanding the malady, and then prescribing the remedy.

Questions with Answers:

1. Q: What caution does the passage give regarding speech?

- A: It advises against uttering things beyond the capacity of the listener.

2. Q: Why is it mentioned that not all knowledge can be disclosed?

- A: It acknowledges the limitations in sharing information openly.

3. Q: What does the passage say about timely utterances?

- A: It emphasizes that not every timely utterance is suitable for every audience.

4. Q: What is the analogy used to describe wisdom in speech?

- A: The perfect method is likened to the approach of a skilled physician.

5. Q: What does the perfect method in speech involve?

- A: It involves diagnosing the disease, understanding the malady, and then prescribing the remedy.

6. Q: Why is it essential to consider the capacity of the listeners?

- A: Considering the capacity of the listeners is crucial for effective communication and understanding.

– 215 –

My hope from the grace of the One true Lord is that thou wilt be enabled to spread the fragrances of God among the tribes. This is extremely important....

If thou succeedest in rendering this service thou shalt excel and be the leader in the field.

Summary:

The passage expresses hope that the reader will spread the fragrances of God among the tribes, emphasizing the significance of this service. Success in this endeavor is presented as a means to excel and become a leader in the field.

Key Points:**1. Expression of Hope:**

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá hopes for the reader to spread the fragrances of God.

2. Importance of Service:

- Emphasizes the extreme importance of the service of spreading God's fragrances.

3. Potential Excellence:

- Success in this service is linked to excelling and becoming a leader in the field.

Questions with Answers:

1. Q: What does the passage express hope for?

- A: It expresses hope for the reader to spread the fragrances of God.

2. Q: Why is spreading God's fragrances considered extremely important?

- A: The passage emphasizes the extreme importance of this service without providing specific details.

3. Q: What is the potential outcome of success in spreading God's fragrances?

- A: Success is linked to excelling and becoming a leader in the field.

– 216 –

Rest assured that the breathings of the Holy Spirit will loosen thy tongue. Speak, therefore; speak out with great courage at every meeting. When thou art about to begin thine address, turn first to Bahá'u'lláh, and ask for the confirmations of the Holy Spirit, then open thy lips and say whatever is suggested to thy heart; this, however, with the utmost courage, dignity and conviction. It is my hope that from day to day your gatherings will grow and flourish, and that those who are seeking after truth will hearken therein to reasoned arguments and conclusive proofs. I am with you heart and soul at every meeting; be sure of this.

Summary:

The passage assures that the breathings of the Holy Spirit will empower the speaker's expression. It encourages speaking with courage and conviction at every meeting, seeking confirmations from

Bahá'u'lláh. The hope is for the gatherings to grow, providing reasoned arguments and conclusive proofs for truth-seekers, with the assurance of support from 'Abdu'l-Bahá.

Key Points:

1. Empowerment by the Holy Spirit:

- The Holy Spirit's breathings are expected to empower the speaker's expression.

2. Courageous and Convincing Speech:

- Encourages the speaker to speak with great courage, dignity, and conviction.

3. Seeking Confirmations:

- Advises turning to Bahá'u'lláh for confirmations of the Holy Spirit before addressing the audience.

4. Hope for Growth:

- Expresses hope for the growth and flourishing of gatherings from day to day.

5. Support and Presence:

- Assures the audience of being present and supportive at every meeting.

Questions with Answers:

1. Q: What is expected to empower the speaker's expression?

- A: The breathings of the Holy Spirit are expected to empower the speaker.

2. Q: How should the speaker approach each meeting?

- A: The speaker should turn to Bahá'u'lláh, seeking confirmations of the Holy Spirit, and then speak with courage, dignity, and conviction.

3. Q: What is expressed as a hope for the gatherings?

- A: The hope is for the gatherings to grow and flourish from day to day.

4. Q: What kind of arguments and proofs are encouraged in the meetings?

- A: Reasoned arguments and conclusive proofs are encouraged.

5. Q: What assurance is given to the audience?

- A: 'Abdu'l-Bahá assures being with the audience heart and soul at every meeting.

– 217 –

The teacher, when teaching, must be himself fully enkindled, so that his utterance, like unto a flame of fire, may exert influence and consume the veil of self and passion. He must also be utterly humble and lowly so that others may be edified, and be totally self-effaced and evanescent so that he may teach with the melody of the Concourse on high—otherwise his teaching will have no effect.

Summary:

The passage emphasizes that a teacher, when delivering a message, must be personally ignited, akin to a flame of fire, to influence and dispel self and passion. Simultaneously, the teacher should embody humility and lowliness for the benefit of others. Total self-effacement is crucial, allowing the teaching to resonate with the melody of the Concourse on high, ensuring its effectiveness.

Key Points:**1. Enkindled Teacher:**

- The teacher must be fully enkindled, like a flame of fire.

2. Influence through Ignition:

- The purpose is to exert influence and consume the veil of self and passion.

3. Humility and Lowliness:

- The teacher needs to be utterly humble and lowly for the edification of others.

4. Self-Effacement:

- Total self-effacement is required to teach with the melody of the Concourse on high.

5. Effectiveness of Teaching:

- The teaching will lack impact unless the teacher embodies these qualities.

Questions with Answers:

1. Q: What metaphor is used to describe the state of the teacher?

- A: The teacher is described as being fully enkindled, like a flame of fire.

2. Q: Why should the teacher be humble and lowly?

- A: To edify others.

3. Q: What is the significance of self-effacement in teaching?

- A: It allows the teacher to convey the message with the melody of the Concourse on high.

4. Q: What is the intended influence of the teacher's state?

- A: To consume the veil of self and passion.

5. Q: Why is total self-effacement crucial for effective teaching?

- A: Without it, the teaching will lack impact and resonance.

– 218 –

O ye close and dear friends of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá!

In the Orient scatter perfumes,
And shed splendors on the West.
Carry light unto the Bulgar,
And the Slav with life invest.

One year after the ascension of Bahá'u'lláh, there came this verse from the lips of the Center of the Covenant. The Covenant-breakers found it strange indeed, and they treated it with scorn. Yet, praised be God, its effects are now manifest, its power revealed, its import clear; for by God's grace, today both East and West are trembling for joy, and now, from sweet waftings of holiness, the whole earth is scented with musk.

The Blessed Beauty, in unmistakable language, hath made this promise in His Book: "We behold you from Our realm of glory, and shall aid whosoever will arise for the triumph of Our Cause with the hosts of the Concourse on high and a company of Our favored angels."¹

God be thanked, that promised aid hath been vouchsafed, as is plain for all to see, and it shineth forth as clear as the sun in the heavens.

Wherefore, O ye friends of God, redouble your efforts, strain every nerve, till ye triumph in your servitude to the Ancient Beauty, the Manifest Light, and become the cause of spreading far and wide the rays of the Daystar of Truth. Breathe ye into the world's worn and wasted body the fresh breath of life, and in the furrows of every region sow ye holy seed. Rise up to champion this Cause; open your lips and teach. In the meeting place of life be ye a guiding candle; in the skies of this world be dazzling stars; in the gardens of unity be birds of the spirit, singing of inner truths and mysteries.

Expend your every breath of life in this great Cause and dedicate all your days to the service of Bahá, so that in the end, safe from loss and deprivation, ye will inherit the heaped-up treasures of the realms above. For the days of a man are full of peril and he cannot rely on so much as a moment more of life; and still the people, who are even as a wavering mirage of illusions, tell themselves that in the end they shall reach the heights. Alas for them! The men of bygone times hugged these same fancies to their breasts, until a wave flicked over them and they returned to dust, and they found themselves excluded and bereft—all save those souls who had freed themselves from self and had flung away their lives in the pathway of God. Their bright star shone out in the skies of ancient glory, and the handed-down memories of all the ages are the proof of what I say.

Wherefore, rest ye neither day nor night and seek no ease. Tell ye the secrets of servitude, follow the pathway of service, till ye attain the promised succor that cometh from the realms of God.

O friends! Black clouds have shrouded all this earth, and the darkness of hatred and malice, of cruelty and aggression and defilement is spreading far and wide. The people, one and all, live out their lives in a heedless stupor and the chief virtues of man are held to be his rapacity and his thirst for blood. Out of all the mass of humankind God hath chosen the friends, and He hath favored them with His guidance and boundless grace. His purpose is this, that we, all of us, should strive with our whole hearts to offer ourselves up, guide others to His path, and train the souls of men—until these frenzied beasts change to gazelles in the meadows of oneness, and these wolves to lambs of God, and these brutish creatures to angelic hosts; till the fires of hatred are quenched, and the flame coming out of the sheltered vale of the Holy Shrine doth shed its splendors; till the foul odor of the tyrant's dunghill is blown away, and yieldeth to the pure, sweet scents that stream from the rosebeds of faith and trust. On that day will the weak of intellect draw on the bounty of the divine, Universal Mind, and they whose life is but abomination will seek out these cleansing, holy breaths.

But there needs must be souls who will manifest such bestowals, there needs must be husbandmen to till these fields, gardeners for these gardens, there needs must be fish to swim in this sea, stars to gleam in these heavens. These ailing ones must be tended by spiritual physicians,

these who are the lost need gentle guides—so that from such souls the bereft may receive their portion, and the deprived obtain their share, and the poor discover in such as they unmeasured wealth, and the seekers hear from them unanswerable proofs.

O my Lord, my Defender, my Help in peril! Lowly do I entreat Thee, ailing do I come unto Thee to be healed, humbly do I cry out to Thee with my tongue, my soul, my spirit:

O God, my God! The gloom of night hath shrouded every region, and all the earth is shut away behind thick clouds. The peoples of the world are sunk in the black depths of vain illusions, while their tyrants wallow in cruelty and hate. I see nothing but the glare of searing fires that blaze upward from the nethermost abyss, I hear nothing save the thunderous roar that belloweth out from thousands upon thousands of fiery weapons of assault, while every land is crying aloud in its secret tongue: “My riches avail me nothing, and my sovereignty hath perished!”

O my Lord, the lamps of guidance have gone out. The flames of passion are mounting high, and malevolence is ever gaining on the world. Malice and hate have overspread the face of the whole earth, and I find no souls except Thine own oppressed small band who are raising up this cry:

Make haste to love! Make haste to trust! Make haste to give! To guidance come!

Come ye for harmony! To behold the Star of Day! Come here for kindliness, for ease! Come here for amity and peace!

Come and cast down your weapons of wrath, till unity is won! Come and in the Lord’s true path each one help each one.

Verily with exceeding joy, with heart and soul, do these oppressed of Thine offer themselves up for all mankind in every land. Thou seest them, O my Lord, weeping over the tears Thy people shed, mourning the grief of Thy children, condoling with humankind, suffering because of the calamities that beset all the denizens of the earth.

O my Lord, wing them with victory that they may soar upward to salvation, strengthen their loins in service to Thy people, and their backs in servitude to Thy Threshold of Holiness.

Verily Thou art the Generous, verily Thou art the Merciful! There is none other God save Thee, the Clement, the Pitiful, the Ancient of Days!

Summary:

The passage urges the friends of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá to actively spread the fragrance of God in both the East and West. The verse from Bahá’u’lláh's book is highlighted, promising divine assistance to those who arise for the triumph of the Cause. The darkness of hatred and malice is depicted, emphasizing the need for devoted service and the transformation of souls. The believers are called

to strive tirelessly, offering themselves for the betterment of humankind and praying for the healing of the world's ailments.

Key Points:

1. Call to Action:

- The friends are called to scatter perfumes in the Orient and bring light to the West.

2. Divine Promise:

- The promise of divine assistance to those who arise for the triumph of the Cause.

3. Spread of Darkness:

- The prevailing darkness of hatred and malice engulfing the world.

4. Transformation of Souls:

- The need for devoted service and the transformation of souls from beasts to angels.

5. Tireless Striving:

- Urging believers to strive tirelessly, offering themselves for the betterment of humankind.

6. Healing the World:

- A prayer for the healing of the world's ailments and the manifestation of divine generosity and mercy.

Questions with Answers:

1. Q: What is the promise mentioned in Bahá'u'lláh's book?

- A: The promise is that God will aid those who arise for the triumph of His Cause with the hosts of the Concourse on high and a company of favored angels.

2. Q: What is the prevailing condition of the world according to the passage?

- A: The world is described as shrouded in darkness, with hatred, malice, cruelty, and aggression spreading far and wide.

3. Q: How are believers called to contribute to the transformation of souls?

- A: Believers are urged to offer themselves in devoted service and prayer, striving to transform souls from beasts to angels.

4. Q: What is the tone of the passage regarding the urgency of believers' actions?

- A: The tone is urgent, urging believers to redouble their efforts and dedicate all their days to the service of Bahá.

5. Q: What is the prayer expressed in the passage?

- A: The prayer seeks divine assistance to heal the world's ailments, wing believers with victory, and strengthen them in service to humanity.

O ye sons and daughters of the Kingdom! Your letter, which was surely inspired of heaven, hath been received. Its contents were most pleasing, its sentiments arising out of luminous hearts.

The believers in London are indeed steadfast and true, they are resolute, they are constant in service; when put to the test, they do not falter, nor doth their fire abate with the passage of time; rather, they are Bahá'ís. They are of heaven, they are filled with light, they are of God. Without any doubt they will become the cause of raising high the Word of God, and advancing the oneness of the world of man; of promoting the teachings of God, and spreading far and near the equality of every member of the human race.

It is easy to approach the Kingdom of Heaven, but hard to stand firm and staunch within it, for the tests are rigorous, and heavy to bear. But the English remain steadfast under all conditions, neither at the first sign of trouble do their footsteps slip. They are not changeable, playing fast and loose with some project and soon giving it up. They do not, for some trivial reason, fail in enthusiasm and zeal, their interest gone. No, in all they do, they are stable, rock-solid and staunch.

Although ye dwell in western lands, still, praise be to God, ye did hear His call from out the east and, even as Moses, did warm your hands at the fire kindled in the Asian Tree. Ye did find the true path, were lit like unto lamps, and have come into the Kingdom of God. And now have ye arisen, out of gratitude for these blessings, and ye are asking God's help for all the peoples of the earth, that their eyes as well may behold the splendors of the Abhá Realm, and their hearts, even as mirrors, reflect the bright rays of the Sun of Truth.

It is my hope that the breaths of the Holy Spirit will so be breathed into your hearts that your tongues will disclose the mysteries, and set forth and expound the inner meanings of the Holy Books; that the friends will become physicians, and will, through the potent medicine of the heavenly Teachings, heal the long-standing diseases that afflict the body of this world; that they will make the blind to see, the deaf to hear, the dead to come alive; that they will awaken those who are sound asleep.

Rest ye assured that the confirmations of the Holy Spirit will descend upon you, and that the armies of the Abhá Kingdom will grant you the victory.

Summary:

The letter addresses the steadfastness and constancy of the believers in London, praising their resilience and commitment to service. It emphasizes the rigorous tests faced by believers and commends the English believers for their stability and unwavering enthusiasm. Despite residing in western lands, they responded to the call from the East, found the true path, and entered the Kingdom of God. The hope is expressed that the believers will be infused with the breath of the

Holy Spirit, enabling them to disclose the mysteries of the Holy Books and become healers of the world's ailments.

Key Points:

1. Praise for Steadfastness:

- The letter commends the believers in London for their steadfastness, resoluteness, and constant service.

2. Test of Faith:

- Acknowledgment of the rigorous tests faced by believers and their ability to stand firm despite challenges.

3. Stability and Commitment:

- Emphasis on the stability, rock-solid commitment, and unwavering enthusiasm of the English believers.

4. Response to the Call:

- Recognition that despite residing in western lands, the believers responded to the call from the East, found the true path, and entered the Kingdom of God.

5. Hope for Divine Assistance:

- Expression of hope that the believers will be infused with the breath of the Holy Spirit, enabling them to disclose mysteries and become healers of the world's ailments.

6. Assurance of Victory:

- Assurance that the confirmations of the Holy Spirit will descend, and the armies of the Abhá Kingdom will grant victory.

Questions with Answers:

1. Q: What qualities of the believers in London are praised in the letter?

- A: The believers are praised for their steadfastness, resoluteness, and constant service.

2. Q: How does the letter describe the English believers' response to challenges?

- A: The English believers are described as stable, rock-solid, and unwavering in their commitment, even in the face of challenges.

3. Q: Despite residing in western lands, what is the significance of the believers' response to the call from the East?

- A: It signifies that the believers responded to the spiritual call, found the true path, and entered the Kingdom of God.

4. Q: What is the hope expressed in the letter regarding the believers?

- A: The hope is that the believers will be infused with the breath of the Holy Spirit, disclosing mysteries and becoming healers of the world's ailments.

5. Q: What assurance is given regarding the believers' efforts?

- A: The letter assures that the confirmations of the Holy Spirit will descend, and the armies of the Abhá Kingdom will grant victory.

– 220 –

The Lord of all mankind hath fashioned this human realm to be a Garden of Eden, an earthly paradise. If, as it must, it findeth the way to harmony and peace, to love and mutual trust, it will become a true abode of bliss, a place of manifold blessings and unending delights. Therein shall be revealed the excellence of humankind, therein shall the rays of the Sun of Truth shine forth on every hand.

Remember how Adam and the others once dwelt together in Eden. No sooner, however, did a quarrel break out between Adam and Satan than they were, one and all, banished from the Garden, and this was meant as a warning to the human race, a means of telling humankind that dissension—even with the Devil—is the way to bitter loss. This is why, in our illumined age, God teacheth that conflicts and disputes are not allowable, not even with Satan himself.

Gracious God! Even with such a lesson before him, how heedless is man! Still do we see his world at war from pole to pole. There is war among the religions; war among the nations; war among the peoples; war among the rulers. What a welcome change would it be, if only these black clouds would lift from off the skies of the world, so that the light of reality could be shed abroad! If only the darksome dust of this continual fighting and killing could settle forever, and the sweet winds of God's loving-kindness could blow from out the wellspring of peace. Then would this world become another world, and the earth would shine with the light of her Lord.

If there is any hope, it is solely in the bounties of God: that His strengthening grace will come, and the struggling and contending will cease, and the acid bite of blood-dripping steel will be turned into the honey-dew of friendship and probity and trust. How sweet would that day be in the mouth, how fragrant as musk the scent thereof.

God grant that the new year will bring a promise of the new peace. May He enable this distinguished assemblage to conclude a fair treaty and establish a just covenant, that you may be blessed forever, across the unborn reaches of time.

[Addressed to the readers of *The Christian Commonwealth*, 1 January 1913]

Summary:

The letter reflects on the potential of the human realm as a Garden of Eden, emphasizing the need for harmony, peace, love, and mutual trust to transform it into an abode of bliss. Drawing parallels to the Edenic story, it warns against dissension, even with Satan, and highlights the destructive nature of conflicts. The plea is made for a cessation of wars among religions, nations, peoples, and rulers, envisioning a world where the clouds of war lift, allowing the light of reality to shine. The hope is expressed for the bounties of God to bring peace, transforming the bitterness of conflict

into the sweetness of friendship and trust. The letter closes with a prayer for the new year to usher in the promise of a new peace through fair treaties and just covenants.

Key Points:

1. Edenic Potential:

- The human realm is envisioned as a potential Garden of Eden, a place of bliss and blessings.

2. Lesson from Edenic Story:

- Reflects on the lesson from the story of Adam and Satan, highlighting the consequences of dissension and conflict.

3. Discouraging Conflicts:

- Expresses the teaching that conflicts and disputes are not allowable, even with Satan, emphasizing the need for unity.

4. World at War:

- Laments the prevailing wars among religions, nations, peoples, and rulers, describing the world engulfed in conflict.

5. Hope for Transformation:

- Expresses hope for a transformative change where the dark clouds of war lift, and the light of reality shines.

6. Bounties of God:

- Relies on the bounties of God to bring peace, envisioning a world where the bitterness of conflict turns into the sweetness of friendship and trust.

7. New Year's Prayer:

- Prays for the new year to bring the promise of a new peace through fair treaties and just covenants.

Questions with Answers:

1. Q: What is the envisioned potential of the human realm?

- A: The human realm is envisioned as a potential Garden of Eden, a place of bliss and blessings.

2. Q: What lesson is drawn from the story of Adam and Satan?

- A: The lesson emphasizes the consequences of dissension and conflict, as illustrated in the Edenic story.

3. Q: Why does the letter discourage conflicts and disputes?

- A: The teaching is that conflicts and disputes are not allowable, even with Satan, emphasizing the need for unity.

4. Q: What is the lamentation regarding the state of the world?

- A: The letter laments the prevailing wars among religions, nations, peoples, and rulers, describing the world engulfed in conflict.

5. Q: What is the expressed hope for the world's transformation?

- A: The hope is for a transformative change where the dark clouds of war lift, and the light of reality shines.

6. Q: What is relied upon to bring about peace?

- A: The reliance is on the bounties of God to bring peace, envisioning a world where the bitterness of conflict turns into the sweetness of friendship and trust.

7. Q: What is the prayer for the new year?

- A: The prayer is for the new year to bring the promise of a new peace through fair treaties and just covenants.

– 221 –

O ye who are steadfast in the Covenant! The pilgrim hath made mention of each one of you, and hath asked for a separate letter addressed to each, but this wanderer in the wilderness of God's love is withheld from correspondence by a thousand preoccupations and concerns; and since out of the easts and the wests of the earth there poureth a mounting flood of letters upon him, it would be impossible to send a separate letter to each one, wherefore this one letter is addressed to each of you, that it may, as sealed wine, rejoice your souls and warm your hearts.

O ye steadfast loved ones! The grace of God is beating down upon mankind, even as the rains in spring, and the rays of the manifest Light have made this earth to be the envy of heaven. But alas, the blind are deprived of this bounty, the heedless are closed off from it, the withered despair of it, the faded are dying away—so that even as flooding waters, this endless stream of grace passeth back into its primal source in a hidden sea. Only a few receive this grace and take their share of it. Wherefore, let us put our hopes in whatever the strong arm of the Beloved can bring about.

We trust that in a time to come the slumberers will waken, and the heedless will be made aware, and the excluded will become initiates in the mysteries. Now must the friends work on with heart and soul and put forth a mighty effort, until the ramparts of dissension are toppled down and the glories of the oneness of humanity lead all to unity.

Today the one overriding need is unity and harmony among the beloved of the Lord, for they should have among them but one heart and soul and should, so far as in them lieth, unitedly withstand the hostility of all the peoples of the world; they must bring to an end the benighted prejudices of all nations and religions and must make known to every member of the human race that all are the leaves of one branch, the fruits of one bough.

Until such time, however, as the friends establish perfect unity among themselves, how can they summon others to harmony and peace?

That soul which hath itself not come alive,
Can it then hope another to revive?

Reflect ye as to other than human forms of life and be ye admonished thereby: those clouds that drift apart cannot produce the bounty of the rain, and are soon lost; a flock of sheep, once scattered, falleth prey to the wolf, and birds that fly alone will be caught fast in the claws of the hawk. What greater demonstration could there be that unity leadeth to flourishing life, while dissension and

withdrawing from the others, will lead only to misery; for these are the sure ways to bitter disappointment and ruin.

The holy Manifestations of God were sent down to make visible the oneness of humanity. For this did They endure unnumbered ills and tribulations, that a community from amongst mankind's divergent peoples could gather within the shadow of the Word of God and live as one, and could, with delight and grace, demonstrate on earth the unity of humankind. Therefore must the desire of the friends be this, to bring together and unify all peoples, that all may receive a generous drink of this pure wine from this cup that is "tempered at the camphor fountain."¹ Let them make the differing populations to be as one and induce the hostile and murderous kindreds of the earth to love one another instead. Let them loose from their shackles the captives of sensual desires and cause the excluded to become intimates of the mysteries. Let them give to the bereft a share of the blessings of these days; let them guide the portionless to inexhaustible treasure. This grace can come about through words and ways and deeds that are of the Unseen Kingdom but, lacking such, it can never be.

The confirmations of God are the surety for these blessings; the sacred bounty of God bestoweth these great gifts. The friends of God are supported by the Kingdom on high and they win their victories through the massed armies of the most great guidance. Thus for them every difficulty will be made smooth, every problem will most easily be solved.

Note ye how easily, where unity existeth in a given family, the affairs of that family are conducted; what progress the members of that family make, how they prosper in the world. Their concerns are in order, they enjoy comfort and tranquillity, they are secure, their position is assured, they come to be envied by all. Such a family but addeth to its stature and its lasting honor, as day succeedeth day. And if we widen out the sphere of unity a little to include the inhabitants of a village who seek to be loving and united, who associate with and are kind to one another, what great advances they will be seen to make, how secure and protected they will be. Then let us widen out the sphere a little more, let us take the inhabitants of a city, all of them together: if they establish the strongest bonds of unity among themselves, how far they will progress, even in a brief period, and what power they will exert. And if the sphere of unity be still further widened out, that is, if the inhabitants of a whole country develop peaceable hearts, and if with all their hearts and souls they yearn to cooperate with one another and to live in unity, and if they become kind and loving to one another, that country will achieve undying joy and lasting glory. Peace will it have, and plenty, and vast wealth.

Note then: if every clan, tribe, community, every nation, country, territory on earth should come together under the single-hued pavilion of the oneness of mankind, and by the dazzling rays of the Sun of Truth should proclaim the universality of man; if they should cause all nations and all creeds to open wide their arms to one another, establish a World Council, and proceed to bind the members of society one to another by strong mutual ties, what would happen then? There is no doubt whatsoever that the divine Beloved, in all His endearing beauty, and with Him a massive host of heavenly confirmations and human blessings and bestowals, would appear in His full glory before the assemblage of the world.

Wherefore, O ye beloved of the Lord, bestir yourselves, do all in your power to be as one, to live in peace, each with the others: for ye are all the drops from but one ocean, the foliage of one tree, the pearls from a single shell, the flowers and sweet herbs from the same one garden. And achieving that, strive ye to unite the hearts of those who follow other faiths.

For one another must ye give up even life itself. To every human being must ye be infinitely kind. Call none a stranger; think none to be your foe. Be ye as if all men were your close kin and

honored friends. Walk ye in such wise that this fleeting world will change into a splendor and this dismal heap of dust become a palace of delights. Such is the counsel of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, this hapless servant.

Summary:

The letter addresses steadfast believers, emphasizing the grace of God and the need for unity among them. It highlights the importance of working together to overcome dissension and

prejudices, striving for harmony and peace. The text emphasizes the interconnectedness of humanity, urging followers to bring people together and foster love among diverse populations.

Key Points:

1. **Introduction** - Addressing steadfast believers.
2. **The Grace of God** - Describing the abundance of divine blessings.
3. **The Urgency of Unity** - Emphasizing the need for unity among believers.
4. **Overcoming Prejudices** - Encouraging the eradication of biases and fostering oneness.
5. **The Role of Believers** - Calling for efforts to unify and spread the message of unity.
6. **The Manifestations of God** - Highlighting the purpose of divine messengers in promoting unity.
7. **The Power of Unity** - Illustrating the positive impact of unity at various levels (family, village, city, country).
8. **A Vision for Global Unity** - Imagining a world where all nations unite under the oneness of mankind.
9. **Final Call to Action** - Urging believers to strive for unity, kindness, and understanding, echoing ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s counsel.

Questions with Answers:

1. Q: What is the primary theme of the letter?
- A: The primary theme is the importance of unity among steadfast believers and the broader human community.
2. Q: How does the letter describe the grace of God?
- A: The grace of God is likened to rain in spring and manifest Light, making the earth the envy of heaven.
3. Q: What does the letter suggest is the current need among the followers of the Covenant?
- A: The immediate need is unity and harmony among the believers to withstand global challenges and prejudices.
4. Q: How does the text envision the impact of unity at different levels?
- A: Unity is depicted as bringing prosperity and security, from family and village to city and entire countries.
5. Q: According to the letter, what is the role of believers in fostering unity?
- A: Believers are called to work with heart and soul, putting forth a mighty effort to topple dissension and promote the oneness of humanity.

– 222 –

O ye homeless and wanderers in the Path of God! Prosperity, contentment, and freedom, however much desired and conducive to the gladness of the human heart, can in no wise compare with the trials of homelessness and adversity in the pathway of God; for such exile and banishment are blessed by the divine favor, and are surely followed by the mercy of Providence. The joy of tranquillity in one’s home, and the sweetness of freedom from all cares shall pass away, whilst the blessing of homelessness shall endure forever, and its far-reaching results shall be made manifest.

Abraham's migration from His native land caused the bountiful gifts of the All-Glorious to be made manifest, and the setting of Canaan's brightest star unfolded to the eyes the radiance of Joseph. The flight of Moses, the Prophet of Sinai, revealed the Flame of the Lord's burning Fire, and the rise of Jesus breathed the breaths of the Holy Spirit into the world. The departure of Muḥammad, the Beloved of God, from the city of His birth was the cause of the exaltation of God's Holy Word, and the banishment of the Sacred Beauty led to the diffusion of the light of His divine Revelation throughout all regions.

Take ye good heed, O people of insight!

Summary:

The letter addresses those homeless and wandering in the Path of God, stating that prosperity and contentment cannot compare to the trials of homelessness, which are blessed by divine favor. It draws parallels between the migrations of Abraham, Moses, Jesus, and Muhammad, emphasizing that such movements resulted in the manifestation of divine gifts and revelations. The enduring

blessing of homelessness is contrasted with the transient nature of prosperity, urging people of insight to take heed.

Key Points:

1. **Introduction** - Addressing the homeless and wanderers on the path of God.
2. **Trials of Homelessness** - Stating that adversity in the pathway of God is blessed and followed by divine mercy.
3. **Abraham's Migration** - Highlighting how Abraham's migration manifested bountiful gifts from the All-Glorious.
4. **Moses and the Flame of the Lord** - Connecting Moses' flight to the revelation of the Flame of the Lord's burning Fire.
5. **Jesus and the Holy Spirit** - Linking Jesus' rise to the spreading of the breaths of the Holy Spirit into the world.
6. **Muhammad's Departure** - Associating Muhammad's departure with the exaltation of God's Holy Word and the diffusion of divine Revelation.
7. **Enduring Blessing of Homelessness** - Contrasting the transient nature of prosperity with the enduring blessing of homelessness.
8. **Call to Insight** - Urging people of insight to take heed and understand the profound spiritual significance of trials.

Questions with Answers:

1. Q: What is asserted about trials of homelessness in the pathway of God?
- A: Trials of homelessness are considered blessed by divine favor and followed by divine mercy.
2. Q: What historical figures' migrations are paralleled in the letter, and what divine manifestations resulted from them?
- A: Abraham's migration manifested bountiful gifts, Moses' flight revealed the Flame of the Lord's burning Fire, Jesus' rise spread the Holy Spirit, and Muhammad's departure exalted God's Holy Word and diffused divine Revelation.
3. Q: How does the letter contrast the joy of tranquility in one's home with the blessing of homelessness?
- A: The letter contrasts the transient nature of joy and tranquility in one's home with the enduring and far-reaching blessing of homelessness.
4. Q: What is the overall message regarding the significance of adversity and trials in God's path?
- A: The overall message is that trials in God's path, particularly homelessness, are spiritually significant, enduring, and blessed.
5. Q: Who is specifically addressed in the final statement, and what is the call to action?
- A: The final statement addresses people of insight, urging them to take heed and understand the profound spiritual significance of trials in God's path.

O ye sons and daughters of the Kingdom! Your letter was received. From its contents it was known that, praise be to God, your hearts are in the utmost purity and your souls rejoice in the glad tidings

of God. The mass of the people are occupied with self and worldly desire, are immersed in the ocean of the nether world and are captives of the world of nature, save those souls who have been freed from the chains and fetters of the material world and, like unto swift-flying birds, are soaring in this unbounded realm. They are awake and vigilant, they shun the obscurity of the world of nature, their highest wish centereth on the eradication from among men of the struggle for existence, the shining forth of the spirituality and the love of the realm on high, the exercise of utmost kindness among peoples, the realization of an intimate and close connection between religions and the practice of the ideal of self-sacrifice. Then will the world of humanity be transformed into the Kingdom of God.

O ye friends, exert ye an effort! Every expenditure is in need of an income. This day, in the world of humanity, men are all the time expending, for war is nothing but the consumption of men and of wealth. At least engage ye in a deed of profit to the world of humanity that ye may partially compensate for that loss. Perchance, through the divine confirmations, ye may be assisted in promulgating amity and concord among men, in substituting love for enmity, in causing universal peace to result from universal war and in converting loss and rancor into profit and love. This wish will be realized through the power of the Kingdom.

Summary:

The letter addresses the sons and daughters of the Kingdom, acknowledging the purity of their hearts and their joy in the glad tidings of God. It contrasts the preoccupation of most people with worldly desires and the struggles of the material world, highlighting those souls who are liberated and soar in a spiritual realm. The letter envisions a transformed world where kindness, spirituality, and self-sacrifice prevail. There is a call to exert effort, emphasizing the need for a positive contribution to compensate for the losses in the world, especially during times of war. The ultimate

goal is the promotion of amity, concord, and universal peace through divine confirmations and the power of the Kingdom.

Key Points:

1. **Introduction** - Acknowledging the receipt of a letter and praising the purity of hearts.
2. **The Duality of Humanity** - Describing the contrast between those immersed in worldly desires and liberated souls soaring in a spiritual realm.
3. **Vision of a Transformed World** - Envisioning a world where spirituality, kindness, and self-sacrifice replace the struggles of the material world.
4. **Call to Exert Effort** - Urging the recipients to engage in deeds that contribute positively to humanity.
5. **The Cost of War** - Highlighting the expenditure of men and wealth in wars and the need for compensatory actions.
6. **Transformation through Divine Confirmations** - Expressing hope that divine confirmations will assist in promoting amity, concord, universal peace, and the conversion of loss into profit and love.
7. **Realization through the Power of the Kingdom** - Emphasizing that the envisioned transformation will be realized through the power of the Kingdom.

Questions with Answers:

1. Q: What is acknowledged about the recipients of the letter?
- A: The recipients' hearts are praised for their purity, and they are noted to rejoice in the glad tidings of God.
2. Q: How does the letter describe the majority of people in the world?
- A: Most people are described as preoccupied with self, worldly desires, and captives of the world of nature.
3. Q: What vision is presented for the transformed world?
- A: The vision involves the eradication of the struggle for existence, the prevalence of spirituality and love, kindness among peoples, and an intimate connection between religions.
4. Q: What is the call to action in the letter?
- A: The recipients are urged to exert effort and engage in deeds that can partially compensate for losses in the world, especially during times of war.
5. Q: How does the letter propose the realization of the envisioned transformation?
- A: The letter suggests that the transformation will be realized through divine confirmations and the power of the Kingdom, resulting in amity, concord, universal peace, and the conversion of loss into profit and love.

O thou servant of God! Thy letter was received. Its contents were lofty and sublime, and its aim high and far-reaching. The world of humanity is in need of great improvement, for it is a material jungle wherein trees without fruit flourish and useless weeds abound. If at all there is a tree that beareth fruit it is overshadowed by the fruitless ones, and if a flower groweth in this jungle it is

hidden and concealed. The world of mankind is in need of expert gardeners who may convert these forests into delectable rose gardens, may substitute for these barren trees ones that yield fruit, and may replace these useless weeds with roses and fragrant herbs. Thus active souls and vigilant people rest neither by day nor by night; they strive to be closely linked to the divine Kingdom and thereby become the manifestations of infinite bounty and ideal gardeners for these forests. Thus the world of humanity will be wholly transformed and the merciful bounties become manifest.

Summary:

The letter addresses a servant of God, acknowledging the loftiness and sublimity of their letter with a far-reaching aim. It highlights the state of the world as a material jungle with barren trees and useless weeds overshadowing any fruitful ones. The analogy emphasizes the need for expert gardeners who, as active and vigilant souls, can transform this jungle into delectable rose gardens,

replacing barren trees and weeds with fruitful ones and fragrant herbs. The ultimate vision is the complete transformation of the world, where merciful bounties become manifest.

Key Points:

1. **Introduction** - Acknowledging the receipt of a lofty and sublime letter from a servant of God.
2. **Analogy of the Material Jungle** - Describing the world of humanity as a jungle with barren trees and useless weeds.
3. **Call for Expert Gardeners** - Emphasizing the need for individuals who can transform the jungle into rose gardens.
4. **Active and Vigilant Souls** - Describing the qualities of those needed to bring about the transformation.
5. **Manifestations of Infinite Bounty** - Envisioning individuals closely linked to the divine Kingdom, becoming manifestations of infinite bounty.
6. **Ideal Gardeners** - Portraying the active souls as ideal gardeners for the world's forests.
7. **Complete Transformation** - Expressing the hope that the world of humanity will be wholly transformed through the efforts of these ideal gardeners.
8. **Manifestation of Merciful Bounties** - Envisaging the manifestation of merciful bounties as a result of the transformation.

Questions with Answers:

1. Q: What is the analogy used to describe the state of the world of humanity?
- A: The world of humanity is likened to a material jungle with barren trees and useless weeds overshadowing any fruitful ones.
2. Q: What is the primary need emphasized in the letter?
- A: The letter emphasizes the need for expert gardeners who can transform the barren jungle into delectable rose gardens.
3. Q: What qualities are described for those who can bring about the transformation?
- A: Active and vigilant souls who strive to be closely linked to the divine Kingdom are described as the ideal individuals to bring about the transformation.
4. Q: What is the ultimate vision for the world of humanity according to the letter?
- A: The ultimate vision is the complete transformation of the world, where merciful bounties become manifest.
5. Q: How are the active souls envisioned in the letter?
- A: The active souls are envisioned as manifestations of infinite bounty and ideal gardeners for the world's forests.

O ye concourse of the Kingdom of Abhá! Two calls to success and prosperity are being raised from the heights of the happiness of mankind, awakening the slumbering, granting sight to the blind, causing the heedless to become mindful, bestowing hearing upon the deaf, unloosing the tongue of the mute and resuscitating the dead.

The one is the call of civilization, of the progress of the material world. This pertaineth to the world of phenomena, promoteth the principles of material achievement, and is the trainer for the physical accomplishments of mankind. It compriseth the laws, regulations, arts and sciences through which the world of humanity hath developed; laws and regulations which are the outcome of lofty ideals and the result of sound minds, and which have stepped forth into the arena of existence through the efforts of the wise and cultured in past and subsequent ages. The propagator and executive power of this call is just government.

The other is the soul-stirring call of God, Whose spiritual teachings are safeguards of the everlasting glory, the eternal happiness and illumination of the world of humanity, and cause attributes of mercy to be revealed in the human world and the life beyond.

This second call is founded upon the instructions and exhortations of the Lord and the admonitions and altruistic emotions belonging to the realm of morality which, like unto a brilliant light, brighten and illumine the lamp of the realities of mankind. Its penetrative power is the Word of God.

However, until material achievements, physical accomplishments and human virtues are reinforced by spiritual perfections, luminous qualities and characteristics of mercy, no fruit or result shall issue therefrom, nor will the happiness of the world of humanity, which is the ultimate aim, be attained. For although, on the one hand, material achievements and the development of the physical world produce prosperity, which exquisitely manifests its intended aims, on the other hand dangers, severe calamities and violent afflictions are imminent.

Consequently, when thou lookest at the orderly pattern of kingdoms, cities and villages, with the attractiveness of their adornments, the freshness of their natural resources, the refinement of their appliances, the ease of their means of travel, the extent of knowledge available about the world of nature, the great inventions, the colossal enterprises, the noble discoveries and scientific researches, thou wouldst conclude that civilization conduceth to the happiness and the progress of the human world. Yet shouldst thou turn thine eye to the discovery of destructive and infernal machines, to the development of forces of demolition and the invention of fiery implements, which uproot the tree of life, it would become evident and manifest unto thee that civilization is conjoined with barbarism. Progress and barbarism go hand in hand, unless material civilization be confirmed by Divine Guidance, by the revelations of the All-Merciful and by godly virtues, and be reinforced by spiritual conduct, by the ideals of the Kingdom and by the outpourings of the Realm of Might.

Consider now, that the most advanced and civilized countries of the world have been turned into arsenals of explosives, that the continents of the globe have been transformed into huge camps and battlefields, that the peoples of the world have formed themselves into armed nations, and that the governments of the world are vying with each other as to who will first step into the field of carnage and bloodshed, thus subjecting mankind to the utmost degree of affliction.

Therefore, this civilization and material progress should be combined with the Most Great Guidance so that this nether world may become the scene of the appearance of the bestowals of the Kingdom, and physical achievements may be conjoined with the effulgences of the Merciful. This in order that the beauty and perfection of the world of man may be unveiled and be manifested before all in the utmost grace and splendor. Thus everlasting glory and happiness shall be revealed.

Praise be to God, throughout succeeding centuries and ages the call of civilization hath been raised, the world of humanity hath been advancing and progressing day by day, various countries have been developing by leaps and bounds, and material improvements have increased, until the world of existence obtained universal capacity to receive the spiritual teachings and to hearken to the Divine Call. The suckling babe passeth through various physical stages, growing and

developing at every stage, until its body reacheth the age of maturity. Having arrived at this stage it acquireth the capacity to manifest spiritual and intellectual perfections. The lights of comprehension, intelligence and knowledge become perceptible in it and the powers of its soul unfold. Similarly, in the contingent world, the human species hath undergone progressive physical changes and, by a slow process, hath scaled the ladder of civilization, realizing in itself the wonders, excellencies and gifts of humanity in their most glorious form, until it gained the capacity to express the splendors of spiritual perfections and divine ideals and became capable of hearkening to the call of God. Then at last the call of the Kingdom was raised, the spiritual virtues and perfections were revealed, the Sun of Reality dawned, and the teachings of the Most Great Peace, of the oneness of the world of humanity and of the universality of men, were promoted. We hope that the effulgence of these rays shall become more and more intense, and the ideal virtues more resplendent, so that the goal of this universal human process will be attained and the love of God will appear in the utmost grace and beauty and bedazzle all hearts.

O ye beloved of God! Know ye, verily, that the happiness of mankind lieth in the unity and the harmony of the human race, and that spiritual and material developments are conditioned upon love and amity among all men. Consider ye the living creatures, namely those which move upon the earth and those which fly, those which graze and those which devour. Among the beasts of prey each kind liveth apart from other species of its genus, observing complete antagonism and hostility; and whenever they meet they immediately fight and draw blood, gnashing their teeth and baring their claws. This is the way in which ferocious beasts and bloodthirsty wolves behave, carnivorous animals that live by themselves and fight for their lives. But the docile, good-natured and gentle animals, whether they belong to the flying or grazing species, associate with one another in complete affinity, united in their flocks, and living their lives with enjoyment, happiness and contentment. Such are the birds that are satisfied with and grateful for a few grains; they live in complete gladness, and break into rich and melodious song while soaring over meadows, plains, hills and mountains. Similarly those animals which graze, like the sheep, the antelope and the gazelle, consort in the greatest amity, intimacy and unity while living in their plains and prairies in a condition of complete contentment. But dogs, wolves, tigers, hyenas and those other beasts of prey, are alienated from each other as they hunt and roam about alone. The creatures of the fields and birds of the air do not even shun or molest one another when they come upon their mutual grazing and resting grounds but accept each other with friendliness, unlike the devouring beasts who immediately tear each other apart when one intrudes upon the other's cave or lair; yea, even if one merely passeth by the abode of another the latter at once rusheth out to attack and if possible kill the former.

Therefore, it hath been made clear and manifest that in the animal kingdom also love and affinity are the fruits of a gentle disposition, a pure nature and praiseworthy character, while discord and isolation are characteristic of the fierce beasts of the wild.

The Almighty hath not created in man the claws and teeth of ferocious animals, nay rather hath the human form been fashioned and set with the most comely attributes and adorned with the most perfect virtues. The honor of this creation and the worthiness of this garment therefore require man to have love and affinity for his own kind, nay rather, to act towards all living creatures with justice and equity.

Similarly, consider how the cause of the welfare, happiness, joy and comfort of humankind are amity and union, whereas dissension and discord are most conducive to hardship, humiliation, agitation and failure.

But a thousand times alas, that man is negligent and unaware of these facts, and daily doth he strut abroad with the characteristics of a wild beast. Lo! At one moment he turneth into a ferocious tiger; at the next he becometh a creeping, venomous viper! But the sublime achievements of man reside in those qualities and attributes that exclusively pertain to the angels of the Supreme Concourse. Therefore, when praiseworthy qualities and high morals emanate from man, he becometh a heavenly being, an angel of the Kingdom, a divine reality and a celestial effulgence. On the other hand, when he engageth in warfare, quarrelling and bloodshed, he becometh viler than the most fierce of savage creatures, for if a bloodthirsty wolf devoureth a lamb in a single night, man slaughtereth a hundred thousand in the field of battle, strewing the ground with their corpses and kneading the earth with their blood.

In short, man is endowed with two natures: one tendeth towards moral sublimity and intellectual perfection, while the other turneth to bestial degradation and carnal imperfections. If ye travel the countries of the globe ye shall observe on one side the remains of ruin and destruction, while on the other ye shall see the signs of civilization and development. Such desolation and ruin are the result of war, strife and quarrelling, while all development and progress are fruits of the lights of virtue, cooperation and concord.

If one were to travel through the deserts of Central Asia he would observe how many cities, once great and prosperous like Paris and London, are now demolished and razed to the ground. From the Caspian Sea to the River Oxus there stretch wild and desolate plains, deserts, wildernesses and valleys. For two days and two nights the Russian railway traverseth the ruined cities and uninhabited villages of that wasteland. Formerly that plain bore the fruit of the finest civilizations of the past. Tokens of development and refinement were apparent all around, arts and sciences were well protected and promoted, professions and industries flourished, commerce and agriculture had reached a high stage of efficiency, and the foundations of government and statesmanship were laid on a strong and solid basis. Today that vast stretch of land hath become mostly the shelter and asylum of Turkoman tribes, and an arena for the ferocious display of wild beasts. The ancient cities of that plain, such as Gurgán, Nissá, Abívard and Shahristán, famous throughout the world for their arts, sciences, culture, industry, and well known for their wealth, greatness, prosperity and distinction, have given way to a wilderness wherein no voice is heard save the roaring of wild beasts and where bloodthirsty wolves roam at will. This destruction and desolation was brought about by war and strife, dissension and discord between the Persians and the Turks, who differed in their religion and customs. So rigid was the spirit of religious prejudice that the faithless leaders sanctioned the shedding of innocent blood, the ruin of property and the desecration of family honor. This is to cite only one illustration.

Consequently, when thou traverseth the regions of the world, thou shalt conclude that all progress is the result of association and cooperation, while ruin is the outcome of animosity and hatred. Notwithstanding this, the world of humanity doth not take warning, nor doth it awake from the slumber of heedlessness. Man is still causing differences, quarrels and strife in order to marshal the cohorts of war and, with his legions, rush into the field of bloodshed and slaughter.

Then again, consider the phenomenon of composition and decomposition, of existence and nonexistence. Every created thing in the contingent world is made up of many and varied atoms, and its existence is dependent on the composition of these. In other words, through the divine creative power a conjunction of simple elements taketh place so that from this composition a distinct organism is produced. The existence of all things is based upon this principle. But when the order is deranged, decomposition is produced and disintegration setteth in, then that thing ceaseth to exist. That is, the annihilation of all things is caused by decomposition and

disintegration. Therefore attraction and composition between the various elements is the means of life, and discord, decomposition and division produce death. Thus the cohesive and attractive forces in all things lead to the appearance of fruitful results and effects, while estrangement and alienation of things lead to disturbance and annihilation. Through affinity and attraction all living things like plants, animals and men come into existence, while division and discord bring about decomposition and destruction.

Consequently, that which is conducive to association and attraction and unity among the sons of men is the means of the life of the world of humanity, and whatever causeth division, repulsion and remoteness leadeth to the death of humankind.

And if, as thou passest by fields and plantations, thou observest that the plants, flowers and sweet-smelling herbs are growing luxuriantly together, forming a pattern of unity, this is an evidence of the fact that that plantation and garden is flourishing under the care of a skilful gardener. But when thou seest it in a state of disorder and irregularity thou inferrest that it hath lacked the training of an efficient farmer and thus hath produced weeds and tares.

It therefore becometh manifest that amity and cohesion are indicative of the training of the Real Educator, and dispersion and separation a proof of savagery and deprivation of divine education.

A critic may object, saying that peoples, races, tribes and communities of the world are of different and varied customs, habits, tastes, character, inclinations and ideas, that opinions and thoughts are contrary to one another, and how, therefore, is it possible for real unity to be revealed and perfect accord among human souls to exist?

In answer we say that differences are of two kinds. One is the cause of annihilation and is like the antipathy existing among warring nations and conflicting tribes who seek each other's destruction, uprooting one another's families, depriving one another of rest and comfort and unleashing carnage. The other kind which is a token of diversity is the essence of perfection and the cause of the appearance of the bestowals of the Most Glorious Lord.

Consider the flowers of a garden: though differing in kind, color, form and shape, yet, inasmuch as they are refreshed by the waters of one spring, revived by the breath of one wind, invigorated by the rays of one sun, this diversity increaseth their charm, and addeth unto their beauty. Thus when that unifying force, the penetrating influence of the Word of God, taketh effect, the difference of customs, manners, habits, ideas, opinions and dispositions embellisheth the world of humanity. This diversity, this difference is like the naturally created dissimilarity and variety of the limbs and organs of the human body, for each one contributeth to the beauty, efficiency and perfection of the whole. When these different limbs and organs come under the influence of man's sovereign soul, and the soul's power pervadeth the limbs and members, veins and arteries of the body, then difference reinforceth harmony, diversity strengtheneth love, and multiplicity is the greatest factor for coordination.

How displeasing to the eye if all the flowers and plants, the leaves and blossoms, the fruits, the branches and the trees of that garden were all of the same shape and color! Diversity of hues, form and shape, enricheth and adorneth the garden, and heighteneth the effect thereof. In like manner, when divers shades of thought, temperament and character, are brought together under the power and influence of one central agency, the beauty and glory of human perfection will be revealed and made manifest. Naught but the celestial potency of the Word of God, which ruleth and transcendeth the realities of all things, is capable of harmonizing the divergent thoughts, sentiments, ideas, and convictions of the children of men. Verily, it is the penetrating power in all things, the mover of souls and the binder and regulator in the world of humanity.

Praise be to God, today the splendor of the Word of God hath illumined every horizon, and from all sects, races, tribes, nations, and communities souls have come together in the light of the Word, assembled, united and agreed in perfect harmony. Oh! What a great number of meetings are held adorned with souls from various races and diverse sects! Anyone attending these will be struck with amazement, and might suppose that these souls are all of one land, one nationality, one community, one thought, one belief and one opinion; whereas, in fact, one is an American, the other an African, one cometh from Asia and another from Europe, one is a native of India, another is from Turkestan, one is an Arab, another a Tajik, another a Persian and yet another a Greek. Notwithstanding such diversity they associate in perfect harmony and unity, love and freedom; they have one voice, one thought and one purpose. Verily, this is from the penetrative power of the Word of God! If all the forces of the universe were to combine they would not be able thus to gather a single assemblage so imbued with the sentiments of love, affection, attraction and enkindlement as to unite the members of different races and to raise up from the heart of the world a voice that shall dispel war and strife, uproot dissension and disputation, usher in the era of universal peace and establish unity and concord amongst men.

Can any power withstand the penetrative influence of the Word of God? Nay, by God! The proof is clear and the evidence is complete! If anyone looketh with the eyes of justice he shall be struck with wonder and amazement and will testify that all the peoples, sects and races of the world should be glad, content and grateful for the teachings and admonitions of Bahá'u'lláh. For these divine injunctions tame every ferocious beast, transform the creeping insect into a soaring bird, cause human souls to become angels of the Kingdom, and make the human world a focus for the qualities of mercy.

Furthermore each and every one is required to show obedience, submission and loyalty towards his own government. Today no state in the world is in a condition of peace or tranquillity, for security and trust have vanished from among the people. Both the governed and the governors are alike in danger. The only group of people which today submitteth peacefully and loyally to the laws and ordinances of government and dealeth honestly and frankly with the people, is none other than this wronged community. For while all sects and races in Persia and Turkestan are absorbed in promoting their own interests and only obey their governments either with the hope of reward or from fear of punishment, the Bahá'ís are the well-wishers of the government, obedient to its laws and bearing love towards all peoples.

Such obedience and submission is made incumbent and obligatory upon all by the clear Text of the Abhá Beauty. Therefore the believers, in obedience to the command of the True One, show the utmost sincerity and goodwill towards all nations; and should any soul act contrary to the laws of the government he would consider himself responsible before God, deserving divine wrath and chastisement for his sin and wrongdoing. It is astonishing that, in spite of this, some of the officials of the government consider the Bahá'ís to be ill-wishers while they regard the members of other communities as their well-wishers. Gracious God! Recently, when there was general revolution and agitation in Tīhrán and in other provinces of Persia, it was proven that not a single Bahá'í had taken part nor intervened in these affairs. For this reason they were reproached by the ignorant because they had obeyed the command of the Blessed Perfection and refrained absolutely from interference in political matters. They were not associated with any party, but busied themselves with their own affairs and professions and discharged their own duties.

All the friends of God bear witness to the fact that 'Abdu'l-Bahá is, from every standpoint, the well-wisher of all governments and nations, and prayeth sincerely for their progress and advancement, especially for the two great states of the east, for these two countries are the native

land and the place of exile of Bahá'u'lláh. In all epistles and writings he hath commended and praised these two governments and hath supplicated divine confirmations for them from the Threshold of the One true God. The Abhá Beauty—may my life be a sacrifice for His loved ones—hath offered prayers on behalf of Their Imperial Majesties. Gracious God! How strange that, notwithstanding these conclusive proofs, every day some event transpireth and difficulties arise. But we, and the friends of God, should on no account slacken our efforts to be loyal, sincere and men of good will. We should at all times manifest our truthfulness and sincerity, nay rather, we must be constant in our faithfulness and trustworthiness, and occupy ourselves in offering prayers for the good of all.

O ye beloved of God, these are days for steadfastness, for firmness and perseverance in the Cause of God. Ye must not focus your attention upon the person of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, for ere long he will bid you farewell. Rather must ye fix your gaze upon the Word of God. If the Word of God is being promoted, rejoice and be happy and thankful, though 'Abdu'l-Bahá himself be threatened by the sword or burdened by the weight of chains and fetters. For the Holy Temple of the Cause of God is important, not the physical body of 'Abdu'l-Bahá. The friends of God must arise with such steadfastness that if, at any moment, a hundred souls like 'Abdu'l-Bahá become the target for the arrows of affliction, they will not shift or waver in their resolve, their determination, their enkindlement, their devotion and service in the Cause of God. 'Abdu'l-Bahá is himself a servant at the Threshold of the Blessed Beauty and a manifestation of pure and utter servitude at the Threshold of the Almighty. He hath no other station or title, no other rank or power. This is my ultimate Purpose, my eternal Paradise, my holiest Temple and my Sadratu'l-Muntahá. With the Abhá Blessed Beauty and the Exalted One, His Herald—may my life be a sacrifice for Them both—hath ended the appearance of God's independent and universal Manifestation. And for a thousand years all shall be illumined by His lights and be sustained by the ocean of His favors.

O ye lovers of God! This, verily, is my last wish and my admonition unto you. Blessed, therefore, is he who is aided by God to follow that which is inscribed upon this scroll whose words are sanctified from the symbols current amongst men.

Summary:

The letter emphasizes two calls to success and prosperity – one related to material progress and civilization, and the other to the spiritual teachings of God. It underscores the necessity of combining material achievements with spiritual perfections for true happiness. The letter elaborates on the potential dangers of material progress without spiritual guidance, emphasizing the need for unity, love, and cooperation among diverse individuals. It addresses the importance of obedience to governments and highlights the role of the Bahá'í community in promoting unity,

obedience, and goodwill. The concluding section encourages steadfastness in the Cause of God, focusing on the Word of God rather than the person of 'Abdu'l-Bahá.

Key Points:

1. **Introduction** - Introduction to the two calls for success and prosperity.
2. **The Call of Civilization** - Emphasis on material progress, laws, and regulations for physical accomplishments.
3. **The Soul-Stirring Call of God** - Spiritual teachings for eternal glory, happiness, and illumination.
4. **Combining Material and Spiritual** - The need to combine material achievements with spiritual perfections.
5. **Potential Dangers of Material Progress** - Warning about destructive inventions and the importance of divine guidance.
6. **Unity and Cooperation** - The necessity of unity, love, and cooperation among diverse individuals.
7. **Obedience to Governments** - Importance of obedience to governments and the exemplary behavior of the Bahá'í community.
8. **The Role of 'Abdu'l-Bahá** - 'Abdu'l-Bahá's role in offering prayers and supplications for governments and nations.
9. **Steadfastness in the Cause of God** - Encouragement for steadfastness in the Cause of God despite challenges.
10. **The Ultimate Purpose** - Clarification on 'Abdu'l-Bahá's station and the end of God's independent Manifestation.
11. **Final Admonition** - The last wish and admonition to focus on the sanctified words inscribed in the scroll.

Questions with Answers:

1. Q: What are the two calls to success and prosperity mentioned in the letter?
- A: One is related to material progress and civilization, and the other is about the spiritual teachings of God.
2. Q: Why does the letter emphasize combining material achievements with spiritual perfections?
- A: To avoid potential dangers and ensure true happiness, unity, and cooperation.
3. Q: What is the role of the Bahá'í community in relation to governments?
- A: The Bahá'í community is portrayed as obedient, sincere, and bearing love towards all peoples.
4. Q: How does the letter characterize the behavior of the Bahá'í community during times of revolution and agitation?
- A: The Bahá'í community refrains from interference in political matters and focuses on their own affairs and duties.
5. Q: What is emphasized as the ultimate purpose, and what should believers focus on?
- A: The ultimate purpose is the Word of God, and believers should focus on it rather than the person of 'Abdu'l-Bahá.

O thou servant of God! Thy letter was received, and was the cause of gladness. Thou hast expressed thine ardent wish that I should attend the Peace Congress. I do not present myself at such political conferences, for the establishment of peace is unachievable save through the power of the Word of God. When a conference is convened, representative of all nations and working under the influence of the Word of God, then universal peace will be established but otherwise it is impossible.

At present it is certain that temporary peace is established but it is not lasting. All governments and nations have become tired of war, of the difficulties of travel, of huge expenditures, of the loss of life, of the affliction of women, of the great number of orphans, and they are driven by force to peace. But this peace is not permanent, it is temporary.

We hope that the power of the Word of God will establish a peace that shall eternally remain effective and secure.

Summary:

The letter conveys that the establishment of lasting peace is unachievable through political conferences alone and emphasizes that true and enduring peace can only be established through the power of the Word of God. It acknowledges the current existence of temporary peace driven

by the exhaustion of war, but anticipates a lasting peace when nations are influenced by the Word of God.

Key Points:

1. Introduction

- Acknowledgment of receiving the letter expressing the wish for attendance at the Peace Congress.
- Clear statement on not presenting oneself at political conferences.

2. Peace through the Word of God

- Emphasis on the unachievable nature of lasting peace without the influence of the Word of God.
- Reiteration that only a conference under the influence of the Word of God can establish universal and lasting peace.

3. Temporary Peace

- Recognition of the current state of temporary peace among nations.
- Explanation that this peace is driven by the exhaustion of war, financial burdens, and other hardships.

4. Hope for Eternal Peace

- Expressing hope that the power of the Word of God will bring about a peace that is eternally effective and secure.
- Implied contrast between temporary peace and the envisioned lasting peace through divine influence.

Questions with Answers:

1. Q: According to the letter, what is unachievable through political conferences alone?
- A: The establishment of lasting peace is unachievable without the influence of the Word of God.
2. Q: What is the current state of peace among nations, as mentioned in the letter?
- A: Temporary peace exists, driven by factors like war exhaustion, financial burdens, and humanitarian concerns.
3. Q: What does the letter propose as the key factor for establishing lasting peace?
- A: The power of the Word of God is emphasized as the essential factor for establishing universal and enduring peace.
4. Q: How does the letter characterize the peace established through political conferences?
- A: The peace mentioned is recognized as temporary, implying that it is not enduring.
5. Q: What is the expressed hope regarding the nature of future peace?
- A: The hope is that the power of the Word of God will establish a peace that is eternally effective and secure.

The letters which ye sent during the war were not received, but a letter dated February 11th, 1916, has just come to hand, and immediately an answer is being written. Your intention deserves a thousand praises, because you are serving the world of humanity, and this is conducive to the happiness and welfare of all. This recent war has proved to the world and the people that war is destruction while universal peace is construction; war is death while peace is life; war is rapacity and bloodthirstiness while peace is beneficence and humaneness; war is an appurtenance of the world of nature while peace is of the foundation of the religion of God; war is darkness upon darkness while peace is heavenly light; war is the destroyer of the edifice of mankind while peace is the everlasting life of the world of humanity; war is like a devouring wolf while peace is like the angels of heaven; war is the struggle for existence while peace is mutual aid and cooperation among the peoples of the world and the cause of the good pleasure of the True One in the heavenly realm.

There is not one soul whose conscience does not testify that in this day there is no more important matter in the world than that of universal peace. Every just one bears witness to this and adores that esteemed Assembly because its aim is that this darkness may be changed into light, this bloodthirstiness into kindness, this torment into bliss, this hardship into ease and this enmity and hatred into fellowship and love. Therefore, the effort of those esteemed souls is worthy of praise and commendation.

But the wise souls who are aware of the essential relationships emanating from the realities of things consider that one single matter cannot, by itself, influence the human reality as it ought and should, for until the minds of men become united, no important matter can be accomplished. At present universal peace is a matter of great importance, but unity of conscience is essential, so that the foundation of this matter may become secure, its establishment firm and its edifice strong.

Therefore Bahá'u'lláh, fifty years ago, expounded this question of universal peace at a time when He was confined in the fortress of 'Akká and was wronged and imprisoned. He wrote about this important matter of universal peace to all the great sovereigns of the world, and established it among His friends in the Orient. The horizon of the East was in utter darkness, nations displayed the utmost hatred and enmity towards each other, religions thirsted for each other's blood, and it was darkness upon darkness. At such a time Bahá'u'lláh shone forth like the sun from the horizon of the east and illumined Persia with the lights of these teachings.

Among His teachings was the declaration of universal peace. People of different nations, religions and sects who followed Him came together to such an extent that remarkable gatherings were instituted consisting of the various nations and religions of the East. Every soul who entered these gatherings saw but one nation, one teaching, one pathway, one order, for the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh were not limited to the establishment of universal peace. They embraced many teachings which supplemented and supported that of universal peace.

Among these teachings was the independent investigation of reality so that the world of humanity may be saved from the darkness of imitation and attain to the truth; may tear off and cast away this ragged and outgrown garment of a thousand years ago and may put on the robe woven in the utmost purity and holiness in the loom of reality. As reality is one and cannot admit of multiplicity, therefore different opinions must ultimately become fused into one.

And among the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh is the oneness of the world of humanity; that all human beings are the sheep of God and He is the kind Shepherd. This Shepherd is kind to all the sheep, because He created them all, trained them, provided for them and protected them. There is no doubt that the Shepherd is kind to all the sheep and should there be among these sheep ignorant ones, they must be educated; if there be children, they must be trained until they reach maturity; if

there be sick ones, they must be cured. There must be no hatred and enmity, for as by a kind physician these ignorant, sick ones should be treated.

And among the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh is that religion must be the cause of fellowship and love. If it becomes the cause of estrangement then it is not needed, for religion is like a remedy; if it aggravates the disease then it becomes unnecessary.

And among the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh is that religion must be in conformity with science and reason, so that it may influence the hearts of men. The foundation must be solid and must not consist of imitations.

And among the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh is that religious, racial, political, economic and patriotic prejudices destroy the edifice of humanity. As long as these prejudices prevail, the world of humanity will not have rest. For a period of 6,000 years history informs us about the world of humanity. During these 6,000 years the world of humanity has not been free from war, strife, murder and bloodthirstiness. In every period war has been waged in one country or another and that war was due to either religious prejudice, racial prejudice, political prejudice or patriotic prejudice. It has therefore been ascertained and proved that all prejudices are destructive of the human edifice. As long as these prejudices persist, the struggle for existence must remain dominant, and bloodthirstiness and rapacity continue. Therefore, even as was the case in the past, the world of humanity cannot be saved from the darkness of nature and cannot attain illumination except through the abandonment of prejudices and the acquisition of the morals of the Kingdom.

If this prejudice and enmity are on account of religion consider that religion should be the cause of fellowship, otherwise it is fruitless. And if this prejudice be the prejudice of nationality consider that all mankind are of one nation; all have sprung from the tree of Adam, and Adam is the root of the tree. That tree is one and all these nations are like branches, while the individuals of humanity are like leaves, blossoms and fruits thereof. Then the establishment of various nations and the consequent shedding of blood and destruction of the edifice of humanity result from human ignorance and selfish motives.

As to the patriotic prejudice, this is also due to absolute ignorance, for the surface of the earth is one native land. Every one can live in any spot on the terrestrial globe. Therefore all the world is man's birthplace. These boundaries and outlets have been devised by man. In the creation, such boundaries and outlets were not assigned. Europe is one continent, Asia is one continent, Africa is one continent, Australia is one continent, but some of the souls, from personal motives and selfish interests, have divided each one of these continents and considered a certain part as their own country. God has set up no frontier between France and Germany; they are continuous. Yet, in the first centuries, selfish souls, for the promotion of their own interests, have assigned boundaries and outlets and have, day by day, attached more importance to these, until this led to intense enmity, bloodshed and rapacity in subsequent centuries. In the same way this will continue indefinitely, and if this conception of patriotism remains limited within a certain circle, it will be the primary cause of the world's destruction. No wise and just person will acknowledge these imaginary distinctions. Every limited area which we call our native country we regard as our motherland, whereas the terrestrial globe is the motherland of all, and not any restricted area. In short, for a few days we live on this earth and eventually we are buried in it, it is our eternal tomb. Is it worth while that we should engage in bloodshed and tear one another to pieces for this eternal tomb? Nay, far from it, neither is God pleased with such conduct nor would any sane man approve of it.

Consider! The blessed animals engage in no patriotic quarrels. They are in the utmost fellowship with one another and live together in harmony. For example, if a dove from the east and a dove from the west, a dove from the north and a dove from the south chance to arrive, at the same time,

in one spot, they immediately associate in harmony. So is it with all the blessed animals and birds. But the ferocious animals, as soon as they meet, attack and fight with each other, tear each other to pieces and it is impossible for them to live peaceably together in one spot. They are all unsociable and fierce, savage and combative fighters.

Regarding the economic prejudice, it is apparent that whenever the ties between nations become strengthened and the exchange of commodities accelerated, and any economic principle is established in one country, it will ultimately affect the other countries and universal benefits will result. Then why this prejudice?

As to the political prejudice, the policy of God must be followed and it is indisputable that the policy of God is greater than human policy. We must follow the Divine policy and that applies alike to all individuals. He treats all individuals alike: no distinction is made, and that is the foundation of the Divine Religions.

And among the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh is the origination of one language that may be spread universally among the people. This teaching was revealed from the pen of Bahá'u'lláh in order that this universal language may eliminate misunderstandings from among mankind.

And among the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh is the equality of women and men. The world of humanity has two wings—one is women and the other men. Not until both wings are equally developed can the bird fly. Should one wing remain weak, flight is impossible. Not until the world of women becomes equal to the world of men in the acquisition of virtues and perfections, can success and prosperity be attained as they ought to be.

And among the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh is voluntary sharing of one's property with others among mankind. This voluntary sharing is greater than equality, and consists in this, that man should not prefer himself to others, but rather should sacrifice his life and property for others. But this should not be introduced by coercion so that it becomes a law and man is compelled to follow it. Nay, rather, man should voluntarily and of his own choice sacrifice his property and life for others, and spend willingly for the poor, just as is done in Persia among the Bahá'ís.

And among the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh is man's freedom, that through the ideal Power he should be free and emancipated from the captivity of the world of nature; for as long as man is captive to nature he is a ferocious animal, as the struggle for existence is one of the exigencies of the world of nature. This matter of the struggle for existence is the fountain-head of all calamities and is the supreme affliction.

And among the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh is that religion is a mighty bulwark. If the edifice of religion shakes and totters, commotion and chaos will ensue and the order of things will be utterly upset, for in the world of mankind there are two safeguards that protect man from wrongdoing. One is the law which punishes the criminal; but the law prevents only the manifest crime and not the concealed sin; whereas the ideal safeguard, namely, the religion of God, prevents both the manifest and the concealed crime, trains man, educates morals, compels the adoption of virtues and is the all-inclusive power which guarantees the felicity of the world of mankind. But by religion is meant that which is ascertained by investigation and not that which is based on mere imitation, the foundations of Divine Religions and not human imitations.

And among the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh is that although material civilization is one of the means for the progress of the world of mankind, yet until it becomes combined with Divine civilization, the desired result, which is the felicity of mankind, will not be attained. Consider! These battleships that reduce a city to ruins within the space of an hour are the result of material civilization; likewise the Krupp guns, the Mauser rifles, dynamite, submarines, torpedo boats, armed aircraft and bombers—all these weapons of war are the malignant fruits of material

civilization. Had material civilization been combined with Divine civilization, these fiery weapons would never have been invented. Nay, rather, human energy would have been wholly devoted to useful inventions and would have been concentrated on praiseworthy discoveries. Material civilization is like a lamp-glass. Divine civilization is the lamp itself and the glass without the light is dark. Material civilization is like the body. No matter how infinitely graceful, elegant and beautiful it may be, it is dead. Divine civilization is like the spirit, and the body gets its life from the spirit, otherwise it becomes a corpse. It has thus been made evident that the world of mankind is in need of the breaths of the Holy Spirit. Without the spirit the world of mankind is lifeless, and without this light the world of mankind is in utter darkness. For the world of nature is an animal world. Until man is born again from the world of nature, that is to say, becomes detached from the world of nature, he is essentially an animal, and it is the teachings of God which convert this animal into a human soul.

And among the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh is the promotion of education. Every child must be instructed in sciences as much as is necessary. If the parents are able to provide the expenses of this education, it is well, otherwise the community must provide the means for the teaching of that child.

And among the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh are justice and right. Until these are realized on the plane of existence, all things shall be in disorder and remain imperfect. The world of mankind is a world of oppression and cruelty, and a realm of aggression and error.

In fine, such teachings are numerous. These manifold principles, which constitute the greatest basis for the felicity of mankind and are of the bounties of the Merciful, must be added to the matter of universal peace and combined with it, so that results may accrue. Otherwise the realization of universal peace by itself in the world of mankind is difficult. As the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh are combined with universal peace, they are like a table provided with every kind of fresh and delicious food. Every soul can find, at that table of infinite bounty, that which he desires. If the question is restricted to universal peace alone, the remarkable results which are expected and desired will not be attained. The scope of universal peace must be such that all the communities and religions may find their highest wish realized in it. The teachings of Bahá'u'lláh are such that all the communities of the world, whether religious, political or ethical, ancient or modern, find in them the expression of their highest wish.

For example, the people of religions find, in the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh, the establishment of Universal Religion—a religion that perfectly conforms with present conditions, which in reality effects the immediate cure of the incurable disease, which relieves every pain, and bestows the infallible antidote for every deadly poison. For if we wish to arrange and organize the world of mankind in accordance with the present religious imitations and thereby to establish the felicity of the world of mankind, it is impossible and impracticable—for example, the enforcement of the laws of the Torah and also of the other religions in accordance with present imitations. But the essential basis of all the Divine Religions which pertains to the virtues of the world of mankind and is the foundation of the welfare of the world of man, is found in the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh in the most perfect presentation.

Similarly, with regard to the peoples who clamor for freedom: the moderate freedom which guarantees the welfare of the world of mankind and maintains and preserves the universal relationships, is found in its fullest power and extension in the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh.

So with regard to political parties: that which is the greatest policy directing the world of mankind, nay, rather, the Divine policy, is found in the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh.

Likewise with regard to the party of “equality” which seeks the solution of the economic problems: until now all proposed solutions have proved impracticable except the economic proposals in the teachings of Bahá’u’lláh which are practicable and cause no distress to society.

So with the other parties: when ye look deeply into this matter, ye will discover that the highest aims of those parties are found in the teachings of Bahá’u’lláh. These teachings constitute the all-inclusive power among all men and are practicable. But there are some teachings of the past, such as those of the Torah, which cannot be carried out at the present day. It is the same with the other religions and the tenets of the various sects and the different parties.

For example, the question of universal peace, about which Bahá’u’lláh says that the Supreme Tribunal must be established: although the League of Nations has been brought into existence, yet it is incapable of establishing universal peace. But the Supreme Tribunal which Bahá’u’lláh has described will fulfill this sacred task with the utmost might and power. And His plan is this: that the national assemblies of each country and nation—that is to say parliaments—should elect two or three persons who are the choicest of that nation, and are well informed concerning international laws and the relations between governments and aware of the essential needs of the world of humanity in this day. The number of these representatives should be in proportion to the number of inhabitants of that country. The election of these souls who are chosen by the national assembly, that is, the parliament, must be confirmed by the upper house, the congress and the cabinet and also by the president or monarch so these persons may be the elected ones of all the nation and the government. The Supreme Tribunal will be composed of these people, and all mankind will thus have a share therein, for every one of these delegates is fully representative of his nation. When the Supreme Tribunal gives a ruling on any international question, either unanimously or by majority rule, there will no longer be any pretext for the plaintiff or ground of objection for the defendant. In case any of the governments or nations, in the execution of the irrefutable decision of the Supreme Tribunal, be negligent or dilatory, the rest of the nations will rise up against it, because all the governments and nations of the world are the supporters of this Supreme Tribunal. Consider what a firm foundation this is! But by a limited and restricted League the purpose will not be realized as it ought and should. This is the truth about the situation, which has been stated....

Summary:

The letter expresses appreciation for the well-wishers of humanity and highlights the destructive nature of war while emphasizing the constructive essence of universal peace. It underscores the interconnected teachings of Bahá’u’lláh, including the independent investigation of reality, oneness of humanity, equality of women and men, voluntary sharing, and the promotion of

education, justice, and right. The importance of combining material and divine civilization is stressed, and the letter concludes with the vision of a Supreme Tribunal to ensure universal peace.

Key Points:

1. Opening

- Appreciation for the well-wishers of humanity.
- Acknowledgment of a letter received.

2. War and Peace

- War is depicted as destruction, death, and darkness.
- Universal peace is portrayed as construction, life, and heavenly light.
- The recent war underscores the need for peace.

3. Essential Relationships

- Unity of conscience is considered crucial for achieving lasting peace.
- Bahá'u'lláh's teachings on universal peace were expounded 50 years ago.
- His teachings went beyond peace, encompassing various principles supporting unity.

4. Teachings of Bahá'u'lláh

- Oneness of Humanity:
 - Illustration of humanity as a flock under the kind Shepherd (God).
- Religion as Fellowship:
 - Religion must foster fellowship and love.
- Conformity with Science and Reason:
 - Religion must align with science and reason to influence hearts.
- Prejudices:
 - Religious, racial, political, economic, and patriotic prejudices are destructive.
- One Language:
 - Advocacy for one universal language to eliminate misunderstandings.
- Equality of Women and Men:
 - Equality is essential for the prosperity of humanity.
- Voluntary Sharing:
 - Encouragement for voluntary sharing, surpassing mere equality.
- Freedom from the World of Nature:
 - Man should be free from the captivity of the world of nature.

5. Justice, Education, and Right

- The promotion of education is essential.
- The necessity of justice and right for the order and progress of mankind.

6. Combining Material and Divine Civilization

- Material civilization, when combined with divine civilization, avoids destructive inventions.
- The lamp (material civilization) needs the light (divine civilization) for true progress.

7. Supreme Tribunal for Universal Peace

- The League of Nations is deemed insufficient for establishing universal peace.

- Description of the Supreme Tribunal composed of representatives elected by nations.
- The Tribunal's rulings would be irrefutable, with support from all nations.

Questions with Answers:

1. Q: What does the letter emphasize about the nature of war and peace?
 - A: War is depicted as destruction, death, and darkness, while universal peace is portrayed as construction, life, and heavenly light.

2. Q: What are some of the essential teachings of Bahá'u'lláh mentioned in the letter?
 - A: Oneness of humanity, equality of women and men, voluntary sharing, and conformity of religion with science and reason, among others.

3. Q: Why does the letter stress the need for unity of conscience?
 - A: Unity of conscience is considered crucial for the establishment of lasting peace.

4. Q: What is the proposed solution for achieving universal peace in the letter?
 - A: The establishment of a Supreme Tribunal composed of representatives elected by nations, as described by Bahá'u'lláh.

5. Q: How does the letter view the combination of material and divine civilization?
 - A: The letter stresses that combining material civilization with divine civilization prevents the invention of destructive technologies and promotes true progress.

– 228 –

O Servant of the Threshold of Bahá'u'lláh! Thy letter dated 14 June 1920 hath been received. A letter from some of the members of the Peace Committee hath also been received and an answer hath been written to them. Deliver it to them.

It is evident that this meeting is not what it is reputed to be and is unable to order and arrange affairs in the manner which is befitting and necessary. However that may be, the matter in which they are engaged is nevertheless of the greatest importance. The meeting at The Hague should have such power and influence that its word will have an effect on the governments and nations. Point out to the revered members gathered there that the Hague Conference held before the war had as its President the Emperor of Russia, and its members were men of the greatest eminence. Nevertheless this did not prevent such a terrible war. Now how will it be? For in the future another war, fiercer than the last, will assuredly break out; verily, of this there is no doubt whatever. What can the Hague meeting do?

But the fundamental principles laid down by Bahá'u'lláh are day by day spreading. Deliver the answer to their letter and express the greatest love and kindness, and leave them to their own affairs. In any case they ought to be pleased with you, and subject to their approval you may print and distribute that detailed epistle of mine which hath already been translated into English.

As to the Esperantists, associate with them. Whenever you find one with capacity, convey to him the fragrances of Life. In all the meetings converse about the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh, because this will be effective today in the western countries. And if they ask regarding your belief in Bahá'u'lláh, you should reply that we consider Him as the foremost Teacher and Educator of the world in this age, and make clear, explaining in detail, that these teachings regarding universal peace and other subjects were revealed by the pen of Bahá'u'lláh fifty years ago and have already

been published in Persia and India and spread abroad throughout the whole world. In the beginning all were incredulous about the idea of universal peace, considering it an impossibility. Further, speak of the greatness of Bahá'u'lláh, of the events that took place in Persia and Turkey, of the astonishing influence that He exerted, of the contents of the Epistles which He addressed to all the sovereigns, and of their fulfillment. Also speak of the spread of the Bahá'í Cause. Associate with the Committee of Universal Peace at The Hague as much as possible, showing them every courtesy.

It is evident that the Esperantists are receptive and thou art familiar with and expert in their language. Communicate also with the Esperantists of Germany and other places. The literature which thou circulatest should deal only with the teachings. The dissemination of other literature is at present not advisable. My hope is that the divine confirmations may continually assist thee....

Grieve not over the apathy and coldness of the Hague meeting. Put thy trust in God. Our hope is that among the people the Esperanto language may hereafter have a powerful effect. Thou hast now sown the seed. Assuredly it will grow. Its growth dependeth upon God.

Summary:

The letter addresses the inadequacy of a Peace Committee meeting, emphasizing the importance of Bahá'u'lláh's teachings. It suggests delivering a response to the Peace Committee and encourages associating with Esperantists to share Bahá'u'lláh's teachings on universal peace. The letter advises discussing Bahá'u'lláh's significance, events in Persia and Turkey, and the fulfillment of His prophecies. The Esperanto language is seen as a potential tool for spreading

Bahá'u'lláh's teachings. The recipient is encouraged not to be disheartened by the apparent indifference of the Peace Committee and to focus on trust in God.

Key Points:

1. Opening

- Acknowledgment of receiving the recipient's letter dated June 14, 1920.
- Reference to a letter from some members of the Peace Committee.

2. Concerns about the Peace Committee

- Expresses doubts about the effectiveness of the Peace Committee.
- Highlights the importance of the meeting having influence on governments and nations.
- Notes that fundamental principles of Bahá'u'lláh are spreading.

3. Interaction with the Peace Committee

- Instructs to deliver the response to the Peace Committee.
- Encourages showing love and kindness.
- Suggests printing and distributing a detailed epistle about Bahá'u'lláh, subject to approval.

4. Engaging with Esperantists

- Advises associating with Esperantists.
- Recommends conveying Bahá'u'lláh's teachings to those with capacity.
- Emphasizes discussing Bahá'u'lláh's role as a Teacher and Educator.

5. Discussion Points on Bahá'u'lláh's Teachings

- Encourages sharing details about Bahá'u'lláh's teachings on universal peace.
- Highlights historical events in Persia and Turkey and the influence of Bahá'u'lláh.
- Suggests discussing the Epistles addressed to sovereigns and their fulfillment.
- Emphasizes the growth and spread of the Bahá'í Cause.

6. Engaging with Esperantists Worldwide

- Recommends communicating with Esperantists globally.
- Proposes focusing literature circulation on Bahá'u'lláh's teachings.
- Advises against disseminating other literature at present.

7. Hope in the Growth of Esperanto Language

- Acknowledges the Esperanto language's potential impact.
- Encourages trust in God despite the apparent apathy of the Hague meeting.
- Expresses hope for the growth of the seed sown among the Esperantists.

Questions with Answers:

1. Q: What does the letter say about the Peace Committee meeting?

- A: The letter questions the meeting's effectiveness and underscores the significance of Bahá'u'lláh's teachings.

2. Q: How does the letter advise the recipient to interact with the Peace Committee?

- A: The letter advises delivering a response to the Peace Committee with love and kindness, and suggests printing an approved detailed epistle on Bahá'u'lláh.

3. Q: What does the letter recommend regarding Esperantists?

- A: The letter encourages associating with Esperantists, sharing Bahá'u'lláh's teachings, and communicating with Esperantists globally.

4. Q: What topics related to Bahá'u'lláh's teachings should be discussed?

- A: The letter recommends discussing universal peace, Bahá'u'lláh's role as a Teacher, historical events, Epistles to sovereigns, and the growth of the Bahá'í Cause.

5. Q: What is the letter's message regarding the Esperanto language?

- A: The letter expresses hope in the Esperanto language's future impact and advises against being disheartened, emphasizing trust in God for its growth.

– 229 –

O sincere servant of the True One! I hear thou art grieved and distressed at the happenings of the world and the vicissitudes of fortune. Wherefore this fear and sorrow? The true lovers of the Abhá Beauty, and they that have quaffed the Cup of the Covenant fear no calamity, nor feel depressed in the hour of trial. They regard the fire of adversity as their garden of delight, and the depth of the sea the expanse of heaven.

Thou who art neath the shelter of God, and under the shadow of the Tree of His Covenant, why sorrow and repine? Rest thou assured and feel confident. Observe the written commandments of thy Lord with joy and peace, with earnestness and sincerity; and be thou the well-wisher of thy country and thy government. His grace shall assist thee at all times, His blessings shall be bestowed upon thee, and thy heart's desire shall be realized.

By the Ancient Beauty!—may my life be a sacrifice for His loved ones—Were the friends to realize what a glorious sovereignty the Lord hath destined for them in His Kingdom, surely they would be filled with ecstasy, would behold themselves crowned with immortal glory and carried away with transports of delight. Erelong it shall be made manifest how brilliantly the light of His bountiful care and mercy hath shone upon His loved ones, and what a turbulent ocean hath been stirred in their hearts! Then will they clamor and exclaim: Happy are we; let all the world rejoice!

Summary:

The letter encourages a sincere servant distressed by worldly events to find solace and confidence in their connection with the Abhá Beauty and the Covenant. It emphasizes that true lovers of God need not fear calamity and should view adversity as a source of delight. The servant is reminded of their shelter under God and the Covenant, advised to observe divine commandments with joy and peace. Being a well-wisher to their country and government is urged, with the assurance of

divine grace and blessings. The letter concludes with a vision of the glorious sovereignty awaiting believers in God's Kingdom, anticipating their ecstasy and joyful exclamation.

Key Points:

1. Addressing Sincere Servant

- Recognition of the servant's distress and grief due to worldly happenings and fluctuations in fortune.
- Inquiring about the reasons behind the fear and sorrow expressed.

2. Exhortation to True Lovers of the Abhá Beauty

- Assurance that true lovers of the Abhá Beauty and those who have partaken in the Covenant need not fear calamity.
- Encouragement to view adversity as a garden of delight and the depth of the sea as the expanse of heaven.

3. Under God's Shelter and Covenant

- Acknowledgment that the servant is under the shelter of God and the shadow of the Tree of His Covenant.
- Questioning the reasons for sorrow and discouragement.
- Directing the servant to observe God's commandments with joy, peace, earnestness, and sincerity.

4. Well-Wishing for Country and Government

- Encouraging the servant to be a well-wisher of their country and government.
- Assurance of God's grace and blessings at all times, with the realization of the servant's heart's desire.

5. Vision of Glorious Sovereignty in God's Kingdom

- Expressing the glorious sovereignty destined for the friends in God's Kingdom.
- Anticipating the believers' ecstasy, immortal glory, and transports of delight.
- Foreshadowing a manifestation of God's bountiful care and mercy, stirring a turbulent ocean in the hearts of believers.
- A vision of the believers clamoring and exclaiming their happiness, urging the world to rejoice.

Questions with Answers:

1. Q: What is the letter's message regarding the response to calamity for true lovers of the Abhá Beauty?

- A: True lovers need not fear calamity and should find delight in the fire of adversity.

2. Q: What encouragement is given to the servant regarding their connection with God and the Covenant?

- A: The servant is advised to rest assured, feel confident, and observe divine commandments with joy and peace.

3. Q: Why is the servant directed to be a well-wisher of their country and government?

- A: It aligns with the attitude of those under the Covenant, promoting goodwill and positive engagement.

4. Q: What is anticipated for believers in God's Kingdom?

- A: Glorious sovereignty, ecstasy, immortal glory, and transports of delight are envisioned.

5. Q: How does the letter portray the future reaction of believers to God's care and mercy?

- A: Believers are expected to clamor and exclaim their happiness, urging the world to rejoice.

– 230 –

O respected personage! Thy second letter dated 19 December 1918 was received. It was the cause of great joy and gladness, for it showed thy firmness and steadfastness in the Covenant and Testament and thy yearning to raise the call of the Kingdom of God. Today the call of the Kingdom is the magnetic power which draweth to itself the world of mankind, for capacity in men is great. Divine teachings constitute the spirit of this age, nay rather the sun of this age. Every soul must endeavor that the veils that cover men's eyes may be torn asunder and that instantly the sun may be seen and that heart and sight may be illumined thereby.

Now, through the aid and bounty of God, this power of guidance and this merciful bestowal are found in thee. Arise, therefore, in the utmost Power that thou mayest bestow spirit upon moldering bones, give sight to the blind, balm and freshness to the depressed, and liveliness and grace to the dispirited. Every lamp will eventually be extinguished save the lamp of the Kingdom, which increaseth day by day in splendor. Every call shall ultimately weaken except the call to the Kingdom of God, which day unto day is raised. Every path shall finally be twisted except the road of the Kingdom, which straighteneth day by day. Undoubtedly heavenly melody is not to be measured with an earthly one, and artificial lights are not to be compared with the heavenly Sun. Hence one must exert endeavor in whatever is lasting and permanent so that one may more and more be illumined, strengthened and revived....

I pray and supplicate the Divine Kingdom that thy father, mother and brother may, through the light of guidance, enter the Kingdom of God.

Summary:

The letter expresses joy at the recipient's firmness in the Covenant and Testament, emphasizing the call of the Kingdom of God as a magnetic force drawing humanity. The recipient is urged to arise with the utmost power, becoming an instrument to illuminate hearts, grant sight to the blind, and bring vitality to the dispirited. The Kingdom of God is highlighted as an eternal light that surpasses all earthly comparisons, steadily increasing in splendor. The importance of striving for

what is lasting and permanent is emphasized. The letter concludes with a prayer for the recipient's family, wishing for their entry into the Kingdom of God through the light of guidance.

Key Points:

1. Expression of Joy

- Recognition and joy in receiving the recipient's second letter dated 19 December 1918.
- Appreciation for the demonstrated firmness and steadfastness in the Covenant and Testament.

2. The Magnetic Power of the Kingdom of God

- Acknowledgment that the call of the Kingdom is a magnetic force drawing humanity.
- Noting the capacity in men for divine teachings, which constitute the spirit of the age.

3. Recipient's Role in Illumination

- Encouragement for the recipient to arise with the utmost power.
- Purpose: To bestow spirit upon moldering bones, give sight to the blind, and bring freshness to the depressed.
- Emphasis on the recipient's role in being an instrument to revive and grace the dispirited.

4. The Ever-Increasing Splendor of the Kingdom

- Highlighting the eternal nature of the Kingdom's light, surpassing earthly comparisons.
- The steady increase of the Kingdom's splendor day by day.
- The enduring and straightening nature of the road to the Kingdom.

5. Striving for the Lasting and Permanent

- Emphasizing the importance of endeavoring for what is lasting and permanent.
- The contrast between heavenly melody and earthly sounds, as well as artificial lights and the heavenly Sun.

6. Prayer for the Recipient's Family

- A closing prayer and supplication to the Divine Kingdom.
- Specific wishes for the recipient's father, mother, and brother to enter the Kingdom of God through the light of guidance.

Questions with Answers:

1. Q: What is the source of joy expressed in the letter?

- A: The recipient's firmness in the Covenant and Testament is the cause of great joy.

2. Q: What is the recipient urged to do in response to the call of the Kingdom?

- A: The recipient is urged to arise with the utmost power to be an instrument for spiritual illumination.

3. Q: How is the Kingdom of God described in comparison to earthly things?

- A: The Kingdom's light is depicted as surpassing earthly comparisons, steadily increasing in splendor.

4. Q: What does the letter emphasize regarding the recipient's role in illumination?

- A: The recipient is encouraged to bestow spirit, sight, and freshness, becoming a source of vitality for others.

5. Q: How does the letter conclude?

- A: The letter concludes with a prayer and supplication for the recipient's family, wishing for their entry into the Kingdom of God through divine guidance.

– 231 –

O thou blossom on the Tree of Life! Happy art thou to have girded thy loins in service; to have risen with all thy power in the promulgation of the divine teachings, to have convened gatherings and to have striven for the exaltation of the Word of God.

In this mortal world every important matter hath an end; and every remarkable achievement a termination; none having permanent existence. For instance, consider how the important achievements of the ancient world have been totally exterminated and not a trace remaineth therefrom save the great Cause of the Kingdom of God, which hath no beginning and will have no end. At most, it is only renewed. At the beginning of each renewal it commandeth no attention in the sight of the people, but when once definitely established, it will daily advance and in its daily exaltation will reach the supreme heavens.

For instance, consider the day of Christ, which was the day of the renewal of the Kingdom of God. The people of the world attached no importance to it and did not realize its significance to such an extent that the sepulchre of Christ remained lost and unknown for three hundred years, until the maidservant of God, Helen, the mother of Constantine arrived and discovered the sacred spot.

My purpose in all this is to show how unobservant are the people of the world and how ignorant, and on the day of the establishment of the Kingdom, they remain heedless and negligent.

Erelong the power of the Kingdom will encompass all the world and then they will be awakened and will cry and lament over those who were oppressed and martyred, and will sigh and moan. Such is the nature of people.

Summary:

The letter praises the recipient for their devoted service in promulgating divine teachings, convening gatherings, and striving for the exaltation of the Word of God. It discusses the transient nature of significant worldly matters and achievements, highlighting the enduring and renewable nature of the Kingdom of God. The analogy of the day of Christ is used to illustrate how people often fail to recognize the significance of the establishment of divine kingdoms. The letter

concludes by foreseeing a future when the power of the Kingdom will encompass the entire world, leading people to awaken and lament over the oppressed and martyred.

Key Points:

1. Commendation for Devoted Service

- Acknowledgment and praise for the recipient's dedicated service in promoting divine teachings.
- Recognition of efforts in convening gatherings and striving for the exaltation of the Word of God.

2. Transient Nature of Worldly Matters

- Reflection on the impermanence of worldly matters and achievements.
- The assertion that every remarkable achievement has a termination, lacking permanent existence.

3. Eternal and Renewable Kingdom of God

- Introduction of the Kingdom of God as an exception to worldly transience.
- Emphasis on the eternal nature of the Kingdom, which has no beginning and will have no end.
- Description of its renewal at different stages, each time commanding little attention initially.

4. Day of Christ as an Illustration

- Illustration of the day of Christ as the renewal of the Kingdom of God.
- Lack of initial significance attached to this day by the people of the world.
- Mention of the discovery of Christ's sepulcher by Helen, the mother of Constantine, after three hundred years.

5. Heedlessness and Negligence of People

- Commentary on the unobservant and ignorant nature of people in the face of divine establishments.
- Reflection on the day of the Kingdom's establishment and how people often remain heedless and negligent.

6. Anticipation of Future Awakening

- Prediction of a future time when the power of the Kingdom will encompass the entire world.
- Foreseeing an awakening of people who will cry and lament over the oppressed and martyred.
- Acknowledgment of the nature of people to only recognize significance after divine establishments have been firmly established.

Questions with Answers:

1. Q: What is the recipient praised for in the letter?

- A: The recipient is commended for their service in promoting divine teachings, convening gatherings, and striving for the exaltation of the Word of God.

2. Q: How is the transient nature of worldly matters described?

- A: The impermanence of worldly matters and achievements is highlighted, emphasizing their lack of permanent existence.

3. Q: What exception to worldly transience is introduced?

- A: The Kingdom of God is presented as an eternal and renewable entity, having no beginning and no end.

4. Q: What analogy is used to illustrate how people often fail to recognize the significance of divine establishments?

- A: The day of Christ is used as an analogy, where the people of the world initially attached no importance to it.

5. Q: What is anticipated for the future in the letter?

- A: The letter foresees a future time when the power of the Kingdom will encompass the entire world, leading people to awaken and lament over the oppressed and martyred.

– 232 –

As to President Wilson, the fourteen principles which he hath enunciated are mostly found in the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh and I therefore hope that he will be confirmed and assisted. Now is the dawn of universal peace; my hope is that its morn will fully break, converting the gloom of war, of strife and of wrangling among men into the light of union, of harmony and of affection.

Summary:

The letter expresses hope and support for President Wilson, stating that the fourteen principles he has enunciated are largely aligned with the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh. It anticipates the dawn of

universal peace, expressing the desire for a complete transformation from the darkness of war and strife to the light of unity, harmony, and affection.

Key Points:

1. Support for President Wilson

- Acknowledgment of President Wilson's fourteen principles.
- Hope and desire for his confirmation and assistance.

2. Alignment with Bahá'u'lláh's Teachings

- Recognition that the principles enunciated by President Wilson can be found in the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh.
- Implication of common values and goals between President Wilson's principles and Bahá'u'lláh's teachings.

3. Hope for Universal Peace

- Anticipation of the dawn of universal peace.
- Expression of hope for the full realization of peace, transforming the current state of war, strife, and wrangling among men.

4. Transformation from Darkness to Light

- Desire for a complete change from the gloom of war to the light of union.
- Transformation from strife and wrangling to harmony and affection among humanity.

Questions with Answers:

1. Q: What is the letter's stance regarding President Wilson's principles?

- A: The letter expresses hope and support for President Wilson, stating that his fourteen principles are mostly found in the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh.

2. Q: What is the anticipated outcome mentioned in the letter?

- A: The letter anticipates the dawn of universal peace, expressing the hope for a complete transformation from the darkness of war and strife to the light of union, harmony, and affection.

– 233 –

O ye faithful friends, O ye sincere servants of Bahá'u'lláh! Now, in the midwatches of the night, when eyes are closed in slumber and all have laid their heads upon the couch of rest and deep sleep, 'Abdu'l-Bahá is wakeful within the precincts of the Hallowed Shrine and, in the ardor of his invocation uttereth this, his prayer:

O Thou kind and loving Providence! The east is astir and the west surgeth even as the eternal billows of the sea. The gentle breezes of holiness are diffused and, from the Unseen Kingdom, the rays of the Orb of Truth shine forth resplendent. The anthems of divine unity are being chanted and the ensigns of celestial might are waving. The angelic Voice is raised and, even as the roaring of the leviathan, soundeth the call to selflessness and evanescence. The triumphal cry *Yá Bahá'u'l-Abhá* resoundeth on every side, and the call *Yá 'Alíyyu'l-A'lá* ringeth throughout all regions. No stir is there in the world save that of the Glory of the One Ravisher of Hearts, and no tumult is there save the surging of the love of Him, the Incomparable, the Well-Beloved.

The beloved of the Lord, with their musk-scented breath, burn like bright candles in every clime, and the friends of the All-Merciful, even as unfolding flowers, can be found in all regions. Not for a moment do they rest; they breathe not but in remembrance of Thee, and crave naught but to serve Thy Cause. In the meadows of truth they are as sweet-singing nightingales, and in the flower garden of guidance they are even as brightly colored blossoms. With mystic flowers they adorn the walks of the Garden of Reality; as swaying cypresses they line the riverbanks of the Divine Will. Above the horizon of being they shine as radiant stars; in the firmament of the world they gleam as resplendent orbs. Manifestations of celestial grace are they, and daysprings of the light of divine assistance.

Grant, O Thou Loving Lord, that all may stand firm and steadfast, shining with everlasting splendor, so that, at every breath, gentle breezes may blow from the bowers of Thy loving-kindness, that from the ocean of Thy grace a mist may rise, that the kindly showers of Thy love may bestow freshness, and the zephyr waft its perfume from the rose garden of divine unity.

Vouchsafe, O Best Beloved of the World, a ray from Thy Splendor. O Well-Beloved of mankind, shed upon us the light of Thy Countenance.

O God Omnipotent, do Thou shield us and be our refuge and, O Lord of Being, show forth Thy might and Thy dominion.

O Thou loving Lord, the movers of sedition are in some regions astir and active, and by night and day are inflicting a grievous wrong.

Even as wolves, tyrants are lying in wait, and the wronged, innocent flock hath neither help nor succor. Hounds are on the trail of the gazelles of the fields of divine unity, and the pheasant in the mountains of heavenly guidance is pursued by the ravens of envy.

O Thou divine Providence, preserve and protect us! O Thou Who art our Shield, save us and defend us! Keep us beneath Thy Shelter, and by Thy Help save us from all ills. Thou art, indeed, the True Protector, the Unseen Guardian, the Celestial Preserver, and the Heavenly Loving Lord.

O ye beloved of the Lord! On one side the standard of the One True God is unfurled and the Voice of the Kingdom raised. The Cause of God is spreading, and manifest in splendor are the wonders from on high. The east is illumined and the west perfumed; fragrant with ambergris is the north, and musk-scented the south.

On the other side the faithless wax in hate and rancor, ceaselessly stirring up grievous sedition and mischief. No day goeth by but someone raiseth the standard of revolt and spurreth his charger into the arena of discord. No hour passeth but the vile adder bareth its fangs and scattereth its deadly venom.

The beloved of the Lord are wrapped in utter sincerity and devotion, unmindful of this rancor and malice. Smooth and insidious are these snakes, these whisperers of evil, artful in their craft and guile. Be ye on your guard and ever wakeful! Quick-witted and keen of intellect are the faithful, and firm and steadfast are the assured. Act ye with all circumspection!

“Fear ye the sagacity of the faithful, for he seeth with the divine light!”

Beware lest any soul privily cause disruption or stir up strife. In the Impregnable Stronghold be ye brave warriors, and for the Mighty Mansion a valiant host. Exercise the utmost care, and day and night be on your guard, that thereby the tyrant may inflict no harm.

Study the Tablet of the Holy Mariner that ye may know the truth and consider that the Blessed Beauty hath fully foretold future events. Let them who perceive take warning. Verily in this is a bounty for the sincere!

Even as dust upon the Sacred Threshold, in utter humility and lowliness, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá is engaged in the promulgation of His signs in the daytime and in the night season. Whensoever he findeth time he prayeth ardently, and beseecheth Him tearfully and fervently, saying:

O Thou divine Providence, pitiful are we, grant us Thy succor; homeless wanderers, give us Thy shelter; scattered, do Thou unite us; astray, gather us to Thy fold; bereft, do Thou bestow upon us a share and portion; athirst, lead us to the wellspring of Life; frail, strengthen us that we may arise to help Thy Cause and offer ourselves as a living sacrifice in the pathway of guidance.

The faithless, however, by day and night, openly and privily do their utmost to shake the foundations of the Cause, to root out the Blessed Tree, to deprive this servant of service, to kindle secret sedition and strife and to annihilate ‘Abdu’l-Bahá. Outwardly they appear as sheep, yet inwardly they are naught but ravening wolves. Sweet in words, they are but at heart a deadly poison.

O ye beloved ones, guard the Cause of God! Let no sweetness of tongue beguile you—nay, rather consider the motive of every soul, and ponder the thought he cherisheth. Be ye straightway mindful and on your guard. Avoid him, yet be not aggressive! Refrain from censure and from slander, and leave him in the Hand of God. Upon you rest the Glory of Glories.

Summary:

‘Abdu’l-Bahá, in a prayerful address to the faithful, seeks divine protection from the challenges faced by the Bahá’í community. He contrasts the sincere believers, who are as radiant stars and fragrant flowers, with the faithless who sow sedition. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá emphasizes the global spread of the Cause, warns against the rising hatred, and advises the believers to be vigilant against

internal and external threats. He expresses his humility in promoting the Cause and beseeches divine assistance against the schemes of the faithless.

Key Points:

1. Nightly Prayer of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá

- ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s heartfelt prayer during the night, invoking divine assistance and expressing the splendor of divine unity.

2. Devotion of the Believers

- The faithful are described as candles, nightingales, blossoms, radiant stars, and brightly colored flowers.
- Their continuous devotion and service to the Cause.

3. Prayer for Divine Freshness and Unity

- ‘Abdu’l-Bahá prays for believers to stand firm, shining with everlasting splendor.
- Invokes gentle breezes, showers of love, and the perfume of divine unity.

4. Appeal for Divine Protection

- Calls upon God as the True Protector, Unseen Guardian, Celestial Preserver, and Heavenly Loving Lord.
- Expresses concern about sedition in some regions and the persecution of the innocent.

5. Global Spread of the Cause and Rising Hatred

- Describes the spread of the Cause with an illuminated east and perfumed west.
- Warns of faithless individuals stirring up sedition and hatred.

Questions with Answers:

1. Q: How does ‘Abdu’l-Bahá characterize the faithful believers?

- A: He describes them as candles, blossoms, nightingales, radiant stars, and brightly colored flowers, emphasizing their sincerity and devotion.

2. Q: What does ‘Abdu’l-Bahá pray for regarding the believers?

- A: He prays for them to stand firm, shine with everlasting splendor, and receive divine freshness, unity, and protection.

3. Q: How does ‘Abdu’l-Bahá describe the actions of the faithless individuals?

- A: Outwardly appearing as sheep, they are described as inwardly being ravening wolves, stirring up sedition and harm.

4. Q: What global phenomenon does ‘Abdu’l-Bahá highlight regarding the Cause?

- A: He describes the Cause spreading globally, with an illuminated east, perfumed west, and wonders manifesting from on high.

5. Q: How does ‘Abdu’l-Bahá advise the believers to approach those who may cause discord?

- A: He advises vigilance, avoidance without aggression, refraining from censure or slander, and leaving the matter in the hands of God.

O thou who art enraptured by the sweet breathings of the Lord! I have noted the contents of thine eloquent letter, and have learned that thou sheddest tears and thy heart is afire from grieving over the imprisonment of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá.

O thou handmaid of God! This prison is sweeter to me and more to be desired than a garden of flowers; to me, this bondage is better than the freedom to go my way, and I find this narrow place more spacious than wide and open plains. Do not grieve over me. And should my Lord decree that I be blessed with sweet martyrdom’s cup, this would but mean receiving what I long for most.

Fear not if this Branch be severed from this material world and cast aside its leaves; nay, the leaves thereof shall flourish, for this Branch will grow after it is cut off from this world below, it shall reach the loftiest pinnacles of glory, and it shall bear such fruits as will perfume the world with their fragrance.

Summary:

‘Abdu’l-Bahá responds to a devoted believer expressing grief over His imprisonment. He reassures the believer, stating that His imprisonment is preferable to freedom, and even martyrdom would be a cherished destiny. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá metaphorically describes His continued spiritual growth,

likening it to a flourishing branch that, when severed, will reach elevated glory and spread fragrant fruits throughout the world.

Key Points:

1. Reassurance to the Devoted Believer

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá acknowledges the believer's grief over His imprisonment.
- Expresses contentment with the prison, considering it more desirable than freedom.

2. Preference for Imprisonment

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá affirms that the prison is sweeter and more desirable than a garden of flowers.
- Describes the narrow place of imprisonment as more spacious than wide and open plains.

3. Longing for Martyrdom

- States that even sweet martyrdom would be a welcomed destiny.
- Conveys the profound desire for what martyrdom symbolizes in spiritual terms.

4. Metaphorical Imagery of Spiritual Growth

- Uses metaphorical language of a flourishing branch severed from the material world.
- Foretells the continued growth and elevation of this spiritual "Branch."

5. Impact on the World

- Promises that despite any severance, the flourishing branch will reach the loftiest pinnacles of glory.
- Assures that the fruits borne by this metaphorical branch will perfume the world with their fragrance.

Questions with Answers:

1. Q: How does 'Abdu'l-Bahá respond to the believer's grief over His imprisonment?

- A: He reassures the believer, expressing contentment with the prison and considering it more desirable than freedom.

2. Q: What metaphorical language does 'Abdu'l-Bahá use to describe His imprisonment?

- A: He likens His imprisonment to a sweet prison that is sweeter and more desirable than a garden of flowers.

3. Q: How does 'Abdu'l-Bahá view the prospect of martyrdom?

- A: He conveys that even sweet martyrdom would be a welcomed destiny, indicating a profound desire for spiritual significance.

4. Q: What metaphorical imagery does 'Abdu'l-Bahá use to describe His spiritual growth?

- A: He uses the metaphor of a flourishing branch that, when severed from the material world, will continue to grow and reach elevated glory.

5. Q: What impact does 'Abdu'l-Bahá foresee regarding the spiritual growth and fruits?

- A: He promises that the flourishing branch, symbolizing spiritual growth, will reach the loftiest pinnacles of glory and bear fruits that perfume the world with their fragrance.

O God, my God! Illumine the brows of Thy true lovers and support them with angelic hosts of certain triumph. Set firm their feet on Thy straight path, and out of Thine ancient bounty open before them the portals of Thy blessings; for they are expending on Thy pathway what Thou hast bestowed upon them, safeguarding Thy Faith, putting their trust in their remembrance of Thee, offering up their hearts for love of Thee, and withholding not what they possess in adoration for Thy Beauty and in their search for ways to please Thee.

O my Lord! Ordain for them a plenteous share, a destined recompense and sure reward.

Verily, Thou art the Sustainer, the Helper, the Generous, the Bountiful, the Ever-Bestowing.

Summary:

This prayer seeks divine assistance and blessings for devoted believers who are actively dedicating themselves to the cause of God. It emphasizes the believers' commitment, trust, love, and sacrifice in the path of faith.

Key Points:

1. Invocation for divine illumination and support for sincere believers.
2. Request for steadfastness on the straight path and divine guidance.
3. Expression of gratitude for believers' devotion, trust, and sacrifices.
4. Appeal for divine blessings, rewarding their efforts and dedication.
5. Acknowledgment of God's attributes as the Sustainer, Helper, Generous, and Bountiful.

Questions with Answers:

1. What is the primary focus of this prayer?
Answer: Seeking divine assistance and blessings for dedicated believers.
2. What qualities and actions of believers are highlighted in the prayer?
Answer: Their commitment, trust, love, and sacrifice for the cause of God.
3. What is the prayer's request regarding the believers' path?
Answer: Seeking divine guidance and steadfastness on the straight path.
4. How does the prayer express gratitude towards believers?
Answer: By acknowledging their devotion, trust, and sacrifices.
5. Which divine attributes are mentioned in the prayer?
Answer: Sustainer, Helper, Generous, Bountiful, and Ever-Bestowing.

O Thou, my God, Who guidest the seeker to the pathway that leadeth aright, Who deliverest the lost and blinded soul out of the wastes of perdition, Thou Who bestowest upon the sincere great bounties and favors, Who guardest the frightened within Thine impregnable refuge, Who answerest, from Thine all-highest horizon, the cry of those who cry out unto Thee. Praised be Thou, O my Lord! Thou hast guided the distracted out of the death of unbelief, and hast brought

those who draw nigh unto Thee to the journey's goal, and hast rejoiced the assured among Thy servants by granting them their most cherished desires, and hast, from Thy Kingdom of beauty, opened before the faces of those who yearn after Thee the gates of reunion, and hast rescued them from the fires of deprivation and loss—so that they hastened unto Thee and gained Thy presence, and arrived at Thy welcoming door, and received of gifts an abundant share.

O my Lord, they thirsted, Thou didst lift to their parched lips the waters of reunion. O Tender One, Bestowing One, Thou didst calm their pain with the balm of Thy bounty and grace, and didst heal their ailments with the sovereign medicine of Thy compassion. O Lord, make firm their feet on Thy straight path, make wide for them the needle's eye, and cause them, dressed in royal robes, to walk in glory for ever and ever.

Verily art Thou the Generous, the Ever-Giving, the Precious, the Most Bountiful. There is none other God but Thee, the Mighty, the Powerful, the Exalted, the Victorious.

O my spiritual loved ones! Praise be to God, ye have thrust the veils aside and recognized the compassionate Beloved, and have hastened away from this abode to the placeless realm. Ye have pitched your tents in the world of God, and to glorify Him, the Self-Subsistent, ye have raised sweet voices and sung songs that pierced the heart. Well done! A thousand times well done! For ye have beheld the Light made manifest, and in your reborn beings ye have raised the cry, "Blessed be the Lord, the best of all creators!" Ye were but babes in the womb, then were ye sucklings, and from a precious breast ye drew the milk of knowledge, then came ye to your full growth, and won salvation. Now is the time for service, and for servitude unto the Lord. Release yourselves from all distracting thoughts, deliver the Message with an eloquent tongue, adorn your assemblages with praise of the Beloved, till bounty shall descend in overwhelming floods and dress the world in fresh greenery and blossoms. This streaming bounty is even the counsels, admonitions, instructions, and injunctions of Almighty God.

O ye my loved ones! The world is wrapped in the thick darkness of open revolt and swept by a whirlwind of hate. It is the fires of malevolence that have cast up their flames to the clouds of heaven, it is a blood-drenched flood that rolleth across the plains and down the hills, and no one on the face of the earth can find any peace. Therefore must the friends of God engender that tenderness which cometh from Heaven, and bestow love in the spirit upon all humankind. With every soul must they deal according to the Divine counselings and admonitions; to all must they show forth kindness and good faith; to all must they wish well. They must sacrifice themselves for their friends, and wish good fortune to their foes. They must comfort the ill-natured, and treat their oppressors with loving-kindness. They must be as refreshing water to the thirsty, and to the sick, a swift remedy, a healing balm to those in pain and a solace to every burdened heart. They must be a guiding light to those who have gone astray, a sure leader for the lost. They must be seeing eyes to the blind, hearing ears to the deaf, and to the dead eternal life, and to the despondent joy forever.

Let them willingly subject themselves to every just king, and to every generous ruler be good citizens. Let them obey the government and not meddle in political affairs, but devote themselves to the betterment of character and behavior, and fix their gaze upon the Light of the world.

Summary:

This prayer expresses gratitude for God's guidance, praising Him for leading seekers on the right path, rescuing the lost, and fulfilling the sincere's desires. It seeks divine assistance for those who yearn for God, praising His generosity and expressing reliance on His mercy. The latter part

encourages the believers to be instruments of God's compassion, promoting love, kindness, and service to humanity.

Key Points:

1. Gratitude for God's guidance and deliverance.
2. Seek divine assistance and blessings for those yearning for God.
3. Praise for God's generosity, compassion, and the fulfillment of sincere desires.
4. Plea for divine guidance for believers to stay on the right path.
5. Encouragement for believers to be instruments of God's compassion, promoting love and service.

Questions with Answers:

1. What does the prayer express gratitude for?
Answer: Gratitude for God's guidance, deliverance, and fulfillment of sincere desires.
2. What is the central plea of the prayer?
Answer: Seeking divine assistance and blessings for those yearning for God.
3. How is God described in the prayer?
Answer: God is praised for His generosity, compassion, and fulfillment of sincere desires.
4. What does the latter part of the prayer encourage believers to do?
Answer: Be instruments of God's compassion, promoting love, kindness, and service to humanity.
5. What specific guidance does the prayer offer to believers in relation to political affairs?
Answer: The prayer advises believers to refrain from meddling in political affairs, instead focusing on character improvement and being good citizens.

– 237 –

Whoso reciteth this prayer with lowliness and fervor will bring gladness and joy to the heart of this Servant; it will be even as meeting Him face to face.

He is the All-Glorious!

O God, my God! Lowly and tearful, I raise my suppliant hands to Thee and cover my face in the dust of that Threshold of Thine, exalted above the knowledge of the learned, and the praise of all that glorify Thee. Graciously look upon Thy servant, humble and lowly at Thy door, with the glances of the eye of Thy mercy, and immerse him in the Ocean of Thine eternal grace.

Lord! He is a poor and lowly servant of Thine, enthralled and imploring Thee, captive in Thy hand, praying fervently to Thee, trusting in Thee, in tears before Thy face, calling to Thee and beseeching Thee, saying:

O Lord, my God! Give me Thy grace to serve Thy loved ones, strengthen me in my servitude to Thee, illumine my brow with the light of adoration in Thy court of holiness, and of prayer to Thy Kingdom of grandeur. Help me to be selfless at the heavenly entrance of Thy gate, and aid me to be detached from all things within Thy holy precincts. Lord! Give me to drink from the

chalice of selflessness; with its robe clothe me, and in its ocean immerse me. Make me as dust in the pathway of Thy loved ones, and grant that I may offer up my soul for the earth ennobled by the footsteps of Thy chosen ones in Thy path, O Lord of Glory in the Highest.

With this prayer doth Thy servant call Thee, at dawning and in the night-season. Fulfill his heart's desire, O Lord! Illumine his heart, gladden his bosom, kindle his light, that he may serve Thy Cause and Thy servants.

Thou art the Bestower, the Pitiful, the Most Bountiful, the Gracious, the Merciful, the Compassionate.

Summary:

This Tablet of Visitation expresses humility, supplication, and a deep longing for God's grace. The petitioner seeks to be strengthened in serving God and prays for illumination, detachment from

worldly matters, and selflessness. The overall theme is devotion to God's service, seeking spiritual enlightenment, and expressing a sincere desire to be selfless in the path of God's chosen ones.

Key Points:

1. Humble supplication and raising hands to God.
2. Covering the face in the dust of God's exalted threshold.
3. Seeking God's grace, mercy, and eternal grace.
4. Petition for strength in serving God and illumination.
5. Desiring selflessness and detachment in God's holy precincts.
6. Drinking from the chalice of selflessness and immersion in its ocean.
7. Offering the soul for the earth ennobled by the footsteps of God's chosen ones.
8. Call for fulfillment of heart's desires, enlightenment, and joy.
9. Invocation of God's attributes: Bestower, Pitiful, Most Bountiful, Gracious, Merciful, Compassionate.

Questions with Answers:

1. What does the petitioner seek in this prayer?
Answer: The petitioner seeks God's grace, strength in serving, and illumination.
2. How does the petitioner express devotion to God's service?
Answer: By seeking to be selfless, detached, and offering the soul for the path of God's chosen ones.
3. What metaphor is used in the prayer to express the desire for selflessness?
Answer: The petitioner asks to be made as dust in the pathway of God's loved ones.
4. Which times of the day does the petitioner call upon God?
Answer: The petitioner calls upon God both at dawn-tide and in the night-season.
5. Name three attributes of God invoked in the prayer.
Answer: Bestower, Most Bountiful, Compassionate.

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Notes on Translations

Passages Translated by Shoghi Effendi

Whenever a passage in one of the Tablets has been translated by the Guardian, that translation has been used. These are identified below. Extensive use has also been made, especially in those sections retranslated by the Committee, of very early translations and notes made by Shoghi Effendi during the lifetime of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá.

Section

2	“The most vital duty...” to “of every living man.”
5	“Let not your hearts...” to “...Our favored angels.”
5	“Be not dismayed...” to “Word amongst men.”
12	Whole Section
15	“In cycles gone by...” to “...merged into one.”
15	“In like manner all the...” to “...their realization.”
20	Whole Section
35	“O army of God! Through...” to “...Covenant and Testament of God.”
38	“These Spiritual Assemblies are aided...” to “...under all conditions.”
42	“Whenever ye enter...” to “...the Compassionate.”
43	Whole Section
44	Whole Section
45	Whole Section except from “is that the members” which is a Committee translation.
52	Whole Section
175	Whole Section
176	Whole Section
194	Whole Section
198	“I never passed a tree...” to “...crucified upon thee.”
202	“The Balkans will remain...” to “...influence will spread.”
204	Whole Section
208	Whole Section
214	“Not everything...” to “...of those who hear it.” ¹
218	“We behold you...” to “...favored angels.”
222	Whole Section
225	“Consider the flowers...” to “...unto their beauty.”
225	“How unpleasing...” to “...the children of men.”
229	Whole Section
234	“Fear not...” to “...with their fragrance.”
237	Whole Section

Sections Translated by Marzieh Gail.

1-4	76	148-163
6-10	79	174
15-17	84-87	181-182
19	90-92	188
21-29	94-97	190-191
31	99-111	193
33	113-114	195-196
35-42	118-119	198-203
47-51	121-123	205-207
53-61	129	209-210
64-65	134	216-221
72-74	137-146	234-236

Sections Translated by a Committee at the World Centre, based on earlier Translations.

5	77–78	147
11	80–83	164–173
13–14	88–89	177–180
18	93	183–187
30	98	189
32	112	192
34	115–117	197
46	120	211–215
62–63	124–128	223–228
66–71	130–133	230–233
75	135–136	

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Notes and References in this Publication

Selections from the Writings of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá

2: “O my Lord! I have drawn nigh unto Thee, in the...”

1. Qur’án 60:13 ↔
2. Matthew 22:14 ↔
3. Qur’án 57:21 ↔

4: “Praise be to Him Who hath made the world of being,...”

1. Qur’án 17:81 ↔
2. Qur’án 15:72 ↔
3. Qur’án 39:68; *Epistle to the Son of the Wolf*, p. 133 ↔
4. Qur’án 74:8 ↔
5. Qur’án 39:68 ↔
6. Qur’án 79:6 ↔
7. Qur’án 22:2 ↔
8. Qur’án 34:39 ↔
9. Qur’án 29:19 ↔
10. Qur’án 79:34 ↔
11. Qur’án 6:91; 52:12 ↔
12. Napoleon III ↔

8: “O ye beloved of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá and ye handmaids of...”

1. Believed to be the angel appointed to sound the trumpet on the Day of Resurrection to raise the dead at the bidding of the Lord. ↔

- 9: "O thou whose heart overfloweth with love for the..."
1. Huqúqu'lláh ⇐
- 19: "Praise be to Him through Whose splendors the..."
1. Qur'án 6:103 ⇐
2. Qur'án 17:110 ⇐
3. John 14:11 ⇐
4. John 14:10 ⇐
5. Qur'án 6:91 ⇐
- 20: "When Christ appeared, twenty centuries ago, although..."
1. Written especially for Dr. Esslemont's immortal work *Bahá'u'lláh and the New Era*. ⇐
- 28: "O leaf upon the Tree of Life! The Tree of Life, of..."
1. John 6:51, 58 ⇐
- 29: "O thou who art captivated by the truth and..."
1. cf. John 15:26; 16:12–13 ⇐
2. Regarding this Tablet Shoghi Effendi's secretary wrote on his behalf, 9 May 1938, "...this obviously refers to the Báb, as the text shows clearly, and is in no way a reference to Swedenborg." ⇐
- 31: "O thou who art dear, and wise! Thy letter dated..."
1. Jesus ⇐
- 35: "O army of God! A letter signed jointly by all of..."
1. Cities in China celebrated for their musk-producing animals. ⇐
- 39: "O handmaid of God! Thy letter hath been received,..."
1. The earthquake of 1906 ⇐
- 44: "The members thereof must take counsel together..."
1. Of a Spiritual Assembly ⇐
- 63: "O ye blessed souls! The letter ye had written to..."
1. The Bahá'ís of Najaf-Ábád ⇐
2. Muḥammad ⇐
- 74: "O bird that singeth sweetly of the Abhá Beauty! In..."
1. Shahnáz, the name given to the recipient of this Tablet, is also the name of a musical mode. ⇐
- 79: "O respected personage! I have read your work,..."
1. An article from Andrew Carnegie's book *The Gospel of Wealth* was published in England in the *Pall Mall Budget* and called *The Gospel of Wealth*, cf. Andrew Carnegie's *Autobiography*, 255n. ⇐
- 87: "O thou memento of him who died for the Blessed..."
1. Qur'án 36:36, and cf. 51:49 ⇐

103: "The education and training of children is among..."

1. Qur'án 25:55, 35:13, 55:19–25. See also Marriage Prayer revealed by 'Abdu'l-Bahá beginning "He is God! O peerless Lord! In Thine almighty wisdom Thou hast enjoined marriage upon the peoples..." ↵
2. See *Some Answered Questions*, pp. 328–9 for 'Abdu'l-Bahá's comments on the arc of descent and ascent. ↵

104: "O loved ones of God and handmaids of the..."

1. cf. Qur'án 37:60 (The Tree of Zaqqúm) ↵
2. cf. Qur'án 24:35 ↵

118: "O ye young Bahá'í children, ye seekers after true..."

1. Genesis 1:26 ↵

123: "O thou who gazest upon the Kingdom of God!..."

1. A Bahá'í children's class in Kenosha, Wisconsin. ↵

129: "O Friends of the Pure and Omnipotent God! To..."

1. Qur'án 25:50 ↵
2. cf. John 3:5 ↵
3. cf. Qur'án 39:57 ↵
4. Possibly 'Abdu'l-Bahá was referring to the Sikhs; the description appears to apply to them. ↵

140: "Thou didst ask as to the transfiguration of Jesus,..."

1. Matthew 17:1–19; Mark 9:2–9; Luke 9:28–36 ↵

143: "O thou who hast drawn nigh unto the spirit of..."

1. John 6:38 ↵
2. John 3:13 ↵

145: "Thou didst write as to the question of spiritual..."

1. The Báb, cf. *Some Answered Questions*, chap. XIII. ↵

154: "O thou son of the Kingdom! Thy most agreeable..."

1. Germany ↵

156: "O thou servant of the Holy Threshold! We have..."

1. cf. Qur'án 3:35; 2:254 ↵

158: "Grieve thou not over the ascension of my beloved..."

1. cf. Qur'án 36:25 ↵

160: "O thou sincere and loyal handmaid of the Lord!..."

1. The Pacific ↵

163: "O ye two seekers after truth! Your letter was..."

1. Matthew 19:24; Mark 10:25 ↵

164: "O ye two faithful and assured souls! The letter..."

1. 30 September 1912 ↵

188: "O ye the cherished loved ones of 'Abdu'l-Bahá!..."

1. at Bahjí ↵

2. Qur'án 24:39 ↔

191: "O thou who hast been sore afflicted on the pathway..."

1. John the Baptist ↔

195: "O thou exalted bough of the divine Lote-Tree!..."

1. Qur'án 36:29 ↔

2. Qur'án 20:12. Also referred to as the "Sacred Vale." ↔

3. cf. Qur'án 4:80 ↔

200: "O my spiritual loved ones! At a time when an..."

1. This letter was signed by four hundred and twenty-two believers in America, and sent on 4 July 1905. ↔

202: "O ye lovers of truth, ye servants of humankind!..."

1. John 18:11 ↔

2. Qur'án 67:3 ↔

206: "Praise be to Him Who hath rent the dark asunder,..."

1. Qur'án 24:35 ↔

2. cf. Qur'án 28:29 ↔

3. Qur'án 76:5 ↔

4. Qur'án 26:31; 26:44; the reference is to Moses' rod, and the enchanters. ↔

207: "O ye who have turned your faces toward the..."

1. Qur'án 61:4 ↔

2. The Báb ↔

3. Qur'án 67:3 ↔

209: "O ye servants of the Blessed Beauty!... It is clear..."

1. Qur'án 2:69 ↔

218: "O ye close and dear friends of 'Abdu'l-Bahá!..."

1. *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, no. 72. ↔

221: "O ye who are steadfast in the Covenant! The..."

1. Qur'án 76:5 ↔

227: "O ye esteemed ones who are pioneers among the..."

1. This is the first part of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's reply to a letter addressed to Him by the Executive Committee of the Central Organization for a Durable Peace. The Tablet, described by Shoghi Effendi in *God Passes By* as of "far reaching importance," and dated December 17, 1919, was dispatched to the Committee at The Hague by the hands of a special delegation. ↔

Notes on Translations

1. This is a tradition which is quoted by Bahá'u'lláh (see *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, item LXXXIX) and is also quoted by 'Abdu'l-Bahá in a Tablet which appears in the compilation of the Universal House of Justice on "Teaching." ↔